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The only true God is the  
Unknowable,

And Herbert Spencer is His Prophet.

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# **HERBERT SPENCER**

## **AND HIS CRITICS.**

**BY**

**CHARLES B. WAITE, A. M.,**

**AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION TO THE YEAR 200," "A CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE REPUBLIC," ETC.**



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## P R E F A C E.

The character of this work, so far as it consists of extracts from the writings of others, will be seen from the following letter from one who is well known in the literary world, and who himself maintained a discussion with Mr. Spencer, carried on on both sides with great brilliancy and power:

38 WESTBOURNE TERRACE, LONDON, W.,  
Fernhurst, Sussex, Aug. 20, 1898.

DEAR SIR: I beg to thank you for your courtesy in forwarding to me the series of papers in the Boston Investigator, which I should have acknowledged much sooner but for the fact that it was sent to the publishers whilst I was away from home and about the country.

The extracts you have so carefully prepared seem to me to have been made with great accuracy and intelligence, and I think they should be satisfactory to Mr. Spencer, as they are to myself.

I am yours faithfully,  
FREDERIC HARRISON.

Interspersed with and following the extracts here referred to, the author has made criticisms of his own, which, it is hoped, will at least be found worthy of thoughtful consideration.



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## CHAPTER I.

### THE NEW PHILOSOPHY—DOCTRINE OF THE UNKNOWNABLE.

No writer of the Nineteenth Century has had greater influence in the world of thought than Herbert Spencer. At the same time no one has been more severely and unsparingly criticised.

These criticisms, with his replies, have exhibited an intellectual gladiatorialship such as has seldom been witnessed; one which has had the effect to arouse discussion and to stimulate thought and inquiry all along the lines of his philosophy. His works are now complete. The labors of a life-time have been brought to a close.

Spencer, as a scientist, is one of the deepest thinkers and one of the ablest and most forcible writers of this or any other age. As a scientist, studying the laws of Nature, and tracing those laws in the changing phenomena of the universe, his greatness will be acknowledged by all. But his ambition had a broader scope. He aspired to co-ordinate and combine science with philosophy; not merely with that positive or

practical philosophy which consists of the highest generalizations of science, but with metaphysical and speculative philosophy as well. Through such co-ordination and combination, he not only sought to unify all knowledge, but, confessedly going beyond the boundaries of science—venturing into unknown regions—he undertook to establish unknowable existence.

Nor did he stop here. This combined system of philosophical science he now essayed to co-ordinate and combine with theology. His doctrine of the Unknowable he himself calls a “metaphysico-theological doctrine.” Proposing to identify the unknowable of science and philosophy with the highest conception of Deity, he attempted a reconciliation between science and religion.

To this vast scheme—this combined system of science, philosophy, metaphysics and theology, he gave the name of

#### THE NEW PHILOSOPHY.

So far as the system is new—so far as it is a departure from the landmarks hitherto established in the fields of science and philosophy—it has undergone the critical examination of many thinkers, and must still be subjected to the crucial test of the sober second thought. It is worthy of note that some of the most trenchant criticisms have been on the speculative side of the New Philosophy. That they have not all been without effect, has been made manifest by

such occasional change in the text of Mr. Spencer's works as seemed necessary.

In this work I purpose, first, to give a brief but complete view of the New Philosophy; secondly, to state the salient points of the principal criticisms which have been made upon it; giving such extracts as may best elucidate the points made; and finally, to examine the doctrine of the Unknowable; especially in reference to the claim that is made, that this doctrine is sufficient to effect a reconciliation between science and religion.

#### THE SPENCERIAN PHILOSOPHY.

In giving a synopsis of the New Philosophy, let us commence with that which, by the author himself, is ever put foremost:

#### DOCTRINE OF THE UNKNOWABLE.

The Unknowable of Spencer is not the mere negation of the knowable. He posits the absolute and independent existence of the Infinite as Ultimate Being, and First Cause.

Though Ultimate Being is conceded to be both unknowable and unthinkable, at the same time he maintains that it is "known with absolute certainty as existing."

To this Unknowable he gives many names:

Cause—First Cause—Unknown Cause—Ultimate Cause—Incomprehensible Cause—Unconditioned Cause—Absolute Cause—Force—Unknown Force—Pure Force—Absolute Force—Power—Unknown Power—Unknowable Power

—Incomprehensible Power—Creating Power—Sustaining Power—Universal Power—Inscrutable Power—Existence—Real Existence—Absolute Existence—Ultimate Existence—Being—Absolute Being—Ultimate Being—Unconditioned Being—Reality—Unknown Reality—Absolute Reality—Unseen Reality—Unconditioned Reality—Ultimate Fact—Noumenon—The Unknowable—The Infinite—The Absolute—The Actual—The Creating—The Inexplicable—The Unconditioned—The Unlimited—The Non-relative—The Unformed—The Incomprehensible—The Omnipresent—The Unaccountable—The Inconceivable—The Unthinkable—The Supernatural.

Spencer does not claim to arrive at the existence of the Unknowable by any process of logic. On the contrary, he shows in the clearest manner, that it cannot be reached by any logical process. He first undertakes to prove the existence of a First Cause. But he immediately cautions his reader against adopting the conclusion; stating that the reasoning is illusive and fallacious, because one of the terms in the proposition in each stage of the argument, is unthinkable. The Unknowable cannot be made the subject of logical deduction, because, when logic is employed for the ascertainment of truth, both terms of every proposition must be such as can be formulated in thought.

How, then, is the existence of the Infinite to be posited?

It is to be done in three ways:

First, from a vague or dim consciousness.

"Besides that *definite* consciousness of which Logic formulates the laws, there is also an indefinite consciousness which cannot be formulated." "To say that we cannot know the Absolute, is by implication to affirm that there *is* an Absolute. In the very denial of our power to learn *what* the Absolute is, there lies hidden the assumption *that* it is; and the making of this assumption proves that the Absolute has been present to the mind, not as a nothing, but as a something."—[First Principles, Sec. 26.]

Spencer holds that we are obliged to form a positive though vague consciousness of that which transcends distinct consciousness.

"Our consciousness of the unconditioned being literally the unconditioned consciousness, or raw material of thought to which in thinking we give definite forms, it follows that an ever-present sense of real existence is the very basis of our intelligence. As we can in successive mental acts get rid of all particular conditions and replace them by others, but cannot get rid of that undifferentiated substance of consciousness which is conditioned anew in every thought; there ever remains with us a sense of that which exists persistently and independently of conditions. At the same time that by the laws of thought we are rigorously prevented from forming a conception of absolute existence; we are by the laws of thought equally prevented from ridding ourselves of the consciousness of absolute existence; this consciousness being, as we have seen, the obverse of our self-consciousness. And since the only possible measure of relative validity among our beliefs, is the degree of their persistence in opposition to the efforts made to change them, it follows that this, which persists at all times, under all circumstances,

and cannot cease until consciousness ceases, has the highest validity of any.”—[Ibid.

Hence the existence of the Unknowable is considered by Mr. Spencer the most certain of all truths.

Another mode in which he posits the Unknowable, is by the antithesis of thought:

“From the very necessity of thinking in relations, it follows that the Relative itself is inconceivable, except as related to a real Non-relative. We have seen that unless a real Non-relative or Absolute be postulated, the Relative itself becomes absolute, and so brings the argument to a contradiction.” “In the very assertion that all our knowledge, properly so called, is Relative, there is involved the assertion that there exists a Non-relative.”—[Ibid.

Hence the Non-relative is posited as the antithesis and correlative of the Relative—the Unlimited and Unconditioned is posited as the antithesis and correlative of the limited and conditioned, and the Infinite as the antithesis and correlative of the finite.

The third mode of arriving at the Unknowable, is by postulating it as the highest generalization of science.

Since the highest generalization of science is the persistence of force, and since the nature of this force is unknown, it is assumed to be the Inscrutable Power behind all phenomena, which is manifested in matter and motion.

This Unknown Force is the Incomprehensible Power manifested in all phenomena. The highest idea in religion, also, is the acknowl-

edgment of the existence of an Inscrutable Power. Thus science and religion are brought together, and the conflict which has lasted for ages, is brought to an end.

This is the reconciliation of religion with science.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE NEW PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED—DOCTRINE OF THE KNOWABLE.

Coming into the region of the Knowable, Mr. Spencer defines Philosophy as knowledge of the highest generality. This is by some writers designated as practical or positive philosophy, as distinguished from speculative philosophy. But he prefers simply the term Philosophy.

"Science," he says, "consists of truths existing more or less separated; and does not recognize these truths as entirely integrated."—[First Principles, Sec. 37.] "As each widest generalization of Science comprehends and consolidates the narrower generalizations of its own division, so the generalizations of Philosophy comprehend and consolidate the widest generalizations of Science. . . . Knowledge of the lowest kind is *un-unified* knowledge; Science is *partially-unified* knowledge; Philosophy is *completely-unified* knowledge."—[Ibid.

Again: We have this statement of the scope and province of science:

"Science concerns itself with the co-existences and sequences among phenomena; grouping these at first into generalizations of a simple or low order, and rising gradually to higher and more extended generalizations."—[Ibid.

Having thus established the boundary line between science and philosophy, the next step is to find some data of philosophy; some means by which the student of philosophy may know when he is making any advance. This data is found in the assumption that the congruities and incongruities of phenomena, which are attested by our consciousness, do really exist.

"The assumption that a congruity or an incongruity exists when consciousness testifies to it, is an inevitable assumption."—[First Prin., Sec. 41.]

This is one of the data of philosophy; but this is in the *process* of thought. There must also be a datum in the *product* of thought.

Auguste Comte thinks it impossible to subject to a critical analysis the relation between subject and object. Mr. Spencer, however, thinks otherwise; and undertakes to analyze this relation. The conclusion is,

"That the manifestations of the Unknowable fall into the two separate aggregates constituting the world of consciousness and the world beyond consciousness."—[First Prin., Sec. 45.]

"The manifestations of the Unknowable, separated into the two divisions of self and not-self, are re-divisible into certain most general forms, the reality of which Science, as well as Common Sense, from moment to moment assumes."—[Ibid.]

#### SPACE, TIME, MATTER, MOTION, AND FORCE.

"Our consciousness of Space is a consciousness of co-existent positions."—[First Prin., Sec. 47.]

"And since a position is not an entity—since the congeries of positions which constitute any conceived

portion of space, and mark its bounds, are not sensible existences, it follows that the co-existent positions which make up our consciousness of Space, are not co-existences in the full sense of the word, (which implies realities as their terms,) but are the blank forms of co-existences left behind when the realities are absent; that is, are the abstracts of co-existences."—[Ibid.

*Space is purely relative.*

"Is there an absolute Space which relative Space in some sort represents? Is Space in itself a form or condition of absolute existence, producing in our minds a corresponding form or condition of relative existence? These are unanswerable questions."—[Ibid.

Parallel remarks are made concerning time.

"Our conception of Matter, reduced to its simplest shape, is that of co-existent positions that offer resistance, as contrasted with our conception of Space, in which the co-existent positions offer no resistance."—[First Prin., Sec. 48.

"The conception of Motion, as presented or represented in the developed consciousness, involves the conceptions of Space, of Time, and of Matter. A something that moves; a series of positions occupied in succession; and a group of co-existent positions, united in thought with the successive ones—these are the constituents of the idea."—[Ibid.

*Force* is the ultimate of ultimates.

"Though Space, Time, Matter, and Motion are apparently all necessary data of intelligence, yet a psychological analysis (here indicated only in rude outline) shows us that these are either built up of, or abstracted from, experiences of force. Matter and Motion, as we know them, are differently conditioned manifestations of Force. Space and Time, as we know them, are disclosed along with these different mani-

festations of Force as the conditions under which they are presented."—[First Prin., Sec. 56.

Our author next proceeds to comment on the indestructibility of Matter, the continuity of Motion, and the persistence of Force.

The persistence of the relations among forces, ordinarily called uniformity of law, is a necessary implication from the fact that Force can neither arise out of nothing nor lapse into nothing.

The Rhythm of Motion forms the subject of a chapter, in which Mr. Spencer claims that all motion is rhythmical. In this doctrine he was supported by Professor Tyndall.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE NEW PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED—DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION.

“An entire history of any thing must include its appearance out of the imperceptible and its disappearance into the imperceptible.”—[First Prin., Sec. 93.]

The sphere of knowledge is co-extensive with the phenomenal. Whenever any thing acts upon our senses under a sensible form, unless it acquired its form at the moment of perception, and lost its sensible form the moment after perception,

“It must have had an antecedent existence under this sensible form, and will have a subsequent existence under this sensible form. These preceding and succeeding existences under sensible forms, are possible subjects of knowledge; and knowledge has obviously not reached its limits until it has united the past, present, and future histories into a whole.”—[Ibid.]

“Setting out abruptly as we do with some substance which already had a concrete form, our history is incomplete; the thing had a history preceding the state with which we started. Hence our theory of things, considered individually or in their totality, is confessedly imperfect so long as any past or future portions of their sensible existences are unaccounted for.”—[Ibid.]

Philosophy has to formulate this passage from the imperceptible into the perceptible, and again from the perceptible into the imperceptible.

The general law of the redistribution of matter and motion, which is required to unify the various kinds of changes,

"Must also be one that unifies the successive changes which sensible existences, separately and together, pass through."—[Ibid.]

In recognizing the fact that Science, tracing back the genealogies of various objects, finds their components were once in diffused states, and pursuing their histories forwards, finds diffused states will again be assumed by them, we have recognized the fact that the formula required for reducing knowledge to a coherent whole, must be one comprehending the two opposite processes of concentration and diffusion.

"The change from a diffused, imperceptible state, to a concentrated, perceptible state, is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; and the change from a concentrated, perceptible state, to a diffused, imperceptible state, is an absorption of motion and concomitant disintegration of matter."—[First Prin., Sec. 94.]

"When taken together, the two opposite processes thus formulated constitute the history of every sensible existence, under its simplest form."—[Ibid.]

But neither of these processes is ever wholly unqualified by the other:

"For each aggregate is at all times both gaining motion and losing motion."—[First Prin., Sec. 96.]

Evolution, then,

"Under its simplest and most general aspect, is the integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; while dissolution is the absorption of motion, and concomitant disintegration of matter."—[First Prin., Sec. 97.

Simple Evolution may also be stated to be, a change from a less coherent form to a more coherent form, consequent on the dissipation of motion and integration of matter.—[Ibid.

This is the simplest form of Evolution. But there is not only a primary but a secondary redistribution of matter in the parts of an aggregate; and this brings us to compound Evolution.

This compound Evolution may be stated thus:

"The primary redistribution ends in forming aggregates which are simple where it is rapid, but which become compound in proportion as its slowness allows the effects of secondary redistributions to accumulate."—[First Prin., Sec. 105.

"To say that the primary redistribution is accompanied by secondary redistributions, is to say that along with the change from a diffused to a concentrated state, there goes on a change from a homogeneous state to a heterogeneous state. The components of the mass while they become integrated also become differentiated."—[First Prin., Sec. 116.

This is the second aspect under which to study Evolution. While the first is progressive integration, this is progressive differentiation.

Both of these forms of Evolution are explained by illustrations drawn from the various sciences: From astronomy, from geology, psy-

chology, biology, sociology, philology. Also from the arts: painting, sculpture, architecture, etc., poetry, and music.

Evolution may now be defined as a "Change from an incoherent homogeneity to a coherent heterogeneity, accompanying the dissipation of motion and integration of matter."—[First Prin., Sec. 127.]

But there is another phase to the doctrine.

"At the same time that Evolution is a change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, it is a change from the indefinite to the definite. Along with an advance from simplicity to complexity, there is an advance from confusion to order—from undetermined arrangement to determined arrangement. Development, no matter of what kind, exhibits not only a multiplication of unlike parts, but an increase in the distinctness with which these parts are marked off from one another."—[First Prin., Sec. 129.]

Here again, many illustrations are given, drawn from the various sciences. In illustrations from the solar system, references are constantly made to the nebular theory as probable. In every instance it is found to accord with the doctrine of Evolution. Though the nebular theory is not here adopted, it should be stated that in his *Essay on the Nebular Hypothesis*, as revised in 1890, Mr. Spencer says: "Practically demonstrated as this process now is, we may say that the doctrine of nebular genesis has passed from the region of hypothesis into the region of established truth."

"The more specific idea of Evolution now reached is—a change from an indefinite, incoherent homogene-

ity, to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, accompanying the dissipation of motion and integration of matter.”—[First Prin., Sec. 138.]

This is the third phase of Evolution.

But the synthesis is not yet complete.

Thus far, only the redistribution of matter has been attended to; the accompanying redistribution of motion having been neglected.

“In proportion as Evolution becomes compound—in proportion as an aggregate retains, for a considerable time, such a quantity of motion as permits secondary redistributions of its component matter, there necessarily arise secondary redistributions of its retained motion. As fast as the parts are transformed there goes on a transformation of the sensible or insensible motion possessed by the parts. The parts cannot become progressively integrated, either individually or as a combination, without their motions, individually or combined, becoming more integrated. There cannot arise among the parts heterogeneities of size, of form, of quality, without there also arising heterogeneities in the amounts and directions of their motions, or the motions of their molecules. And increasing definiteness of the parts implies increasing definiteness of their motions.

“In short, the rhythmical actions going on in each aggregate, must differentiate and integrate at the same time that the structure does so.”—[First Prin., Sec. 139.]

This is the fourth and final phase of the doctrine of Evolution, which must now be stated as follows:

“Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to

a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.”—[First Prin., Sec. 145.]

Having thus completed the synthesis, and having stated the doctrine of Evolution in its ultimate form, we must now look for some all-pervading principle which underlies this all-pervading process.

“Just as it was possible to interpret the empirical generalizations called Kepler’s laws, as necessary consequences of the law of gravitation; so it may be possible to interpret the foregoing empirical generalizations as necessary consequences of some deeper law.”—[First Prin., Sec. 146.]

This law is found to be the persistence of force.—[First Prin., Sec. 155.]

There is another cause of increasing complexity—another cause which necessitates a change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous; and which, when joined to the first, makes the change more rapid and more involved. This is the multiplicity of effects following from a single force.

The general interpretation of Evolution is not yet complete.

The laws set forth furnish a key to the re-arrangement of parts which Evolution exhibits, in so far as it is an advance from the uniform to the multiform. We must now have a key to this re-arrangement in so far as it is an advance from the indefinite to the definite. This key is found in the law by virtue of which such portions of the permanently effective forces acting on any

aggregate, as produced sensible motions in its parts, work a segregation of those parts. This is called the law of segregation.

The redistributions of matter going on around us, are ever being brought to conclusions by the dissipation of the motions which affect them. In all cases, there is a process toward equilibration. This law of equilibration is deducible from the persistence of force.

There is a gradual advance toward harmony between man's mental nature and the conditions of his existence. Hence we have a warrant for the belief that Evolution can end only in the establishment of the greatest perfection and the most complete happiness.

Dissolution is a process the reverse of that traced in the history and genesis of Evolution. The law of equilibration and the law of the rhythm of motion render probable alternate eras of Evolution and Dissolution.

There is no guaranty for the permanent existence of the race. The outcome of the processes of equilibration constantly going on, not only on the surface of the earth but in the solar system, must be omnipresent death.—[First Prin., Sec. 176.

Carrying the argument still further, based upon what may be called the rhythm of the universe, we are led to infer a subsequent universal life.

"And thus there is suggested the conception of a past during which there have been successive Evolu-

tions analogous to that which is now going on; and a future during which successive other such Evolutions may go on—ever the same in principle but never the same in concrete result.”—[First Prin., Sec. 183.]

In closing a summary of the New Philosophy, it is claimed that it is neither materialistic nor spiritualistic; or rather, that it is as much the one as the other.

“Though the relation of subject and object renders necessary to us these antithetical conceptions of spirit and matter; the one is no less than the other to be regarded as but a sign of the Unknown Reality which underlies both.”—[First Prin., Sec. 194.]

The foregoing outline of the New Philosophy must now be filled up with a summary of Spencer’s Biology, Psychology, and Sociology: also of his “Data of Ethics”; with a glance at his other writings.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE NEW PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED—SPENCER'S BIOLOGY.

In the first volume, the author treats of the general principles of the science, as connected with the doctrine of Evolution.

The four chief elements which, in various combinations, make up living bodies, are oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon. Three are gaseous, and are known only in the aeriform state, while carbon is known only as a solid.

There is a certain significance in this, when we take into account the fact that the phenomena of Evolution imply motions in the units that are involved in the redistribution of matter and motion. There is a probable meaning in the fact that organic bodies, which exhibit the phenomena of Evolution in so high a degree, are mainly composed of ultimate units having extreme mobility.

A portion of organic matter of a living organism, contains several of these elements, and their mobility is an aid to the vital processes.

Mechanical forces produce important changes

in organic bodies; but the agency of chief importance is chemical affinity.

**LIFE.**—Life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations. The degree of life varies as the degree of correspondence.

**INDUCTIONS OF BIOLOGY.**—These are: Growth—Development—Function—Waste and Repair—Adaptation—Individuality—Genesis—Heredity—Variation—Classification—Distribution.

**GROWTH** is dependent on the available supply of such environing matters as are of like nature with the matters composing the organism. The available supply of assimilable matter being the same, and other conditions not dissimilar, the degree of growth varies according to the surplus of nutrition over expenditure. This surplus of nutrition over expenditure, is a variable quantity; and, other things being equal, upon it depends the limit of growth.

**DEVELOPMENT** is primarily central. All organic forms of which the entire history is known, set out with a symmetrical arrangement of parts round a center. This central development may be distinguished into unicentral, where the product of the original germ develops symmetrically round one center; or multicentral, where the development is in subordination to many centers.

**STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION.**—Does Structure originate Function, or does Function originate

Structure? The answer is not easy; but the author considers that Function must be regarded as taking precedence of Structure. Both Structure and Function progress from the homogeneous, indefinite and incoherent, to the heterogeneous, definite and coherent.

In discussing the question of WASTE and REPAIR, the author comes to the conclusion that there are certain physiological units which are concerned in this process, and which possess an organic polarity not possessed by chemical units nor by morphological units.

ADAPTATION requires that organic types should be comparatively stable. The structure of any organism being a product of the almost infinite series of actions and re-actions to which all ancestral organisms have been exposed, it follows that any unusual actions and re-actions brought to bear on an individual, can have but an infinitesimal effect in permanently changing the structure of the organism as a whole.

INDIVIDUALITY.—We may consider as an individual, any center or axis that is capable of independently carrying on that continuous adjustment of inner to outer relations which constitutes Life.

GENESIS.—There is homogenesis, and heterogenesis. Homogenesis, in which successive generations are alike, is by sexual genesis, or gamogenesis. But in heterogenesis, which is characterized by unlikeness of the successive genera-

tions, there is agamogenesis occasionally recurring with gamogenesis.

**HEREDITY AND VARIATION.**—The phenomena of heredity assimilate with other phenomena. We must conclude that the likeness of any organism to either parent, is conveyed by the special tendencies of the physiological units derived from the parent. Homogeneity being an unstable state, variations must occur.

The biological **CLASSIFICATION** is based upon natural differences between individuals, species, genera, orders, and classes.

The subject of **DISTRIBUTION** is treated in reference to the distribution of organisms through space and time.

Coming to the **EVOLUTION OF LIFE**, the subject is considered under the Special Creation hypothesis, and under the hypothesis of Evolution. The arguments from Classification, the arguments from Embryology, from Morphology, and from Distribution, are all considered.

The question is treated with reference to the external factors and the internal factors—in reference to direct and indirect equilibration.

The theory of Special Creation originated in an era of darkness, is unsupported by facts, and cannot be definitely formulated in thought. The Evolution hypothesis has the opposite characteristics. In regard to Classification, the kinship of groups through their lowest members, is just the kinship which the philosophy of Evolution implies.

**EMBRYOLOGY.**—Von Baer set forth this remarkable induction:

In its earliest stage, every organism has the greatest number of characters in common with all other organisms in their earliest stages. At a stage somewhat later, its structure is like the structures displayed at corresponding phases by a less extensive multitude of organisms. At each subsequent stage, traits are acquired which successively distinguish the developing embryo from groups of embryos that it previously resembled—thus step by step diminishing the class of embryos which it still resembles. Thus the class of similar forms is finally narrowed to the species of which it is a member.

This induction is adopted by Mr. Spencer, and made the basis of an argument in favor of the production of organic forms by a process of Evolution.

From Morphology an analogous argument is drawn; while arguments are found also in the distribution of Flora and Fauna over the globe.

In the second volume of his Biology, Mr. Spencer treats of the problems of Morphology (structure), and of Physiology (function), and of the Laws of Multiplication as applied to organisms.

**MORPHOLOGY.**—Evolution implies insensible modifications and gradual transitions, which render definition difficult—which make it impossible to separate absolutely the phases of organization from one another. The doctrine that all

organisms are built up of cells, or that cells are the elements out of which every tissue is developed, is but approximately true.

In the course of development, both animals and plants display not only progressive integrations, but progressive differentiations of the resulting aggregates, both as wholes and in their parts.

**PHYSIOLOGY—FUNCTION.**—The author next proceeds to consider those differentiations and integrations of organic functions which have simultaneously arisen with the processes of integration and differentiation of organic form;—how heterogeneities of action have progressed along with heterogeneities of structure.

The author holds that there must be a continual adaptation of structure, such as opposes to new outer forces equal inner forces, and that such re-adjustment is inheritable.

**LAWs OF MULTIPLICATION.**—If organisms have been evolved, their respective powers of multiplication must have been determined by natural causes. Grant that the countless specialities of structure and function in plants and animals, have arisen from the actions and re-actions between them and their environments, continued from generation to generation, and it follows that from these actions and re-actions have also arisen those countless degrees of fertility which we see among them.

The forces preservative of race are two: abil-

ity in each member of the race to preserve itself, and ability to produce other members.

There is an opposition in organisms between self-maintenance and maintenance of the race. Assuming other things to remain the same—as suming that environing conditions as to climate, food, enemies, etc., continue constant; then, inevitably, every higher degree of individual evolution is followed by a lower degree of race-multiplication, and *vice versa*.

The author concludes that in man the tendency is to a condition when there will be a substantial balance between the mortality and the number of births in a generation.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE NEW PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED—SPENCER'S PSYCHOLOGY.

The first volume deals with what is designated, in the closing paragraph, as Objective Psychology, in contradistinction to Subjective Psychology, which is treated in the second volume.

In considering the data of Psychology, the nervous system is described, first, in its structure, and secondly, in its functions.

The most striking contrast between the lowest animals and the highest, is that which exists between the small self-mobility of the one and the great self-mobility of the other. This is illustrated by reference to various animals, and leads to an examination of the internal differences. Where activity begins to show itself a nervous system begins to be visible. And when the power of self-government is great, the nervous system is comparatively well developed. There is also an increment of nervous endowment, corresponding with each increment of complexity.

These psychological phenomena, under their

objective aspect, when reduced to their lowest terms, are incidents in the continuous redistribution of matter and motion.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

The nervous system is composed of two tissues, which both differ considerably from those composing the rest of the organism. They are usually distinguished from one another by their colors, as gray and white, and by their minute structures, as vesicular and fibrous. Chemical analyses have not at present thrown more than a flickering light on the constitution of nerve-matter in general, or on the constitution of one kind of nerve-matter, as contrasted with the other. All that can be asserted with safety is, that each kind contains phosphatic fats and protein substances; but that these components are both differently distributed and in different states in the two tissues.

The gray tissue consists of nerve-cells, the white of nerve-fibers. Nerve-tubes with their contained protein threads, and nerve-cells with their contained and surrounding masses of changing protein substance, are the histologic elements of which the nervous system is built up. These elements are put together by means of the peripheral terminations of the nerve-tubes —plexuses of fibres, formed of the essential nerve-substance, that are continuous with one another, and nerve-centers, or ganglions. This arrangement of the nervous system is minutely described; also the position and office of the

"medulla oblongata," or enlarged termination of the spinal cord, lying within the skull; also the two great bi-lobed ganglia, which in man form the chief mass of the brain—the "cerebellum" and the "cerebrum."

#### FUNCTIONS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

The initial inquiry is, how the nervous system serves as at once the agent by which motions are liberated and the agent by which motions are co-ordinated. Three things have to be explained: 1. What are the causes which on appropriate occasions determine the nervous system to set up motion? 2. By what process does it liberate the insensible motion locked up in certain tissues, and cause its transformation into sensible motion? 3. How does it adjust sensible motions into those combinations, simultaneous and successive, needful for efficient action on the external world? These questions cover the whole of the functions of the nervous system with which we are directly concerned.

The functions of the nervous centers may be classified, approximately, as co-ordinations that are simple, compound and doubly compound.

The centers in which molecular motion is liberated, are also the centers in which it is co-ordinated; and the successively higher and larger centers which evolve successively larger quantities of molecular motion, are also centers in which successively more complex co-ordinations are effected.

There are conditions essential to nervous action, one of which is, continuity of nerve-substance. Hence, one of the conditions to nervous action is, absence of much pressure. It is a familiar truth, also, that nerves and nerve-centers act only so long as they are furnished with those needful materials which the blood vessels bring them.

The author then treats of nervous phenomena as phenomena of consciousness. Feeling is the subjective correlate of that which we know objectively as nervous action.

The more complex feelings conform to the same general laws to which the simpler feelings conform. In this regard, emotions come in the same category with sensations, except that emotions are of far more involved natures than sensations, and imply the co-operation of extremely intricate nervous structures.

That which distinguishes Psychology from the sciences on which it rests, is, that each of its propositions takes account both of the connected internal phenomena and of the connected external phenomena to which they refer.

Of the substance of mind, considered as the something of which all particular states of mind are modifications, we are in absolute ignorance.

The proximate components of mind are of two broadly contrasted kinds—feelings, and the relations between feelings. Feelings of different orders cohere with one another less strongly than do feelings of the same order.

Discussing the relativity of the relations between feelings, Mr. Spencer, after dwelling upon the many cases in which the ideas and mental impressions concerning external objects differ from each other, comes to the conclusion that the relations of co-existence, of sequence, and of difference, as we know them, do not obtain beyond consciousness.

In the General Synthesis, the author treats of the correspondence between life and mind. The lowest life is found in environments of unusual simplicity. The correspondence between the internal changes and external relations is at once direct and homogeneous. The correspondence extends in space and time, and increases in specificity, in generality, and in complexity. These correspondences must also be co-ordinated and integrated.

In the Special Synthesis, the nature of intelligence is considered.

The two great classes of vital actions, called Physiology and Psychology, are broadly distinguished in this, that while the one includes both simultaneous and successive changes, the other includes successive changes only. The briefest introspection makes it clear that the actions constituting thought occur, not together, but one after another.

As the external phenomena responded to become greater in number and more complicated in kind, the variety and rapidity of the changes to which the common center of communication

is subject, must increase—there must result an unbroken series of these nervous changes, the subjective face of which is what we call a coherent consciousness.

Hence the progress of the correspondence between the organism and its environment necessitates a gradual reduction of the sensorial changes to a succession; and, by so doing, evolves a distinct consciousness—a consciousness that becomes higher as the succession becomes more rapid and the correspondence more complete.

All life, whether physical or psychical, being the combination of changes in correspondence with external co-existences and sequences, it results that if the changes constituting psychical life occur in succession, the law of their succession must be the law of their correspondence.

Reflex action, under its simplest form, is the sequence of a single contraction upon a single irritation.

In instinct the correspondence is between inner and outer relations that are very simple or general; in reason the correspondence is between inner and outer relations that are complex, or special, or abstract, or infrequent.

The experience hypothesis furnishes an adequate solution. The genesis of instinct, the development of memory and of reason out of it, and the consolidation of rational actions and inferences into instinctive ones, are alike explicable on the single principle, that the cohesion be-

tween psychical states is proportionate to the frequency with which the relation between the answering external phenomena has been repeated in experience.

**THE WILL.**—The development of what we call Will is but another aspect of the general process which has been considered. Memory, reason, and feeling simultaneously arise as the automatic actions become complex, infrequent, and hesitating; and Will, arising at the same time, is necessitated by the same conditions.

In Part V, entitled "Physical Synthesis," a more elaborate statement is made of the genesis and function of the nervous structures.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NEW PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED—SUBJECTIVE PSYCHOLOGY.

The author begins with the most highly involved intellectual phenomena; those involved in compound, quantitative reasoning; proceeding thence to the less complex processes—imperfect and simple quantitative reasoning; quantitative reasoning in general; perfect qualitative reasoning; imperfect qualitative reasoning; and reasoning in general.

The conclusion arrived at is, that reasoning, whether exhibited in a simple inference or in a chain of such inferences, is the indirect establishment of a definite relation between two things; and that the achievement of this is by one or many steps, each of which consists in the establishment of a definite relation between two definite relations.

Reasoning presupposes classification, and classification presupposes reasoning. They are different sides of the same thing—the necessary complements of each other. The idea underlying all classification is that of similarity.

Likeness of relations is the intuition common to reasoning and classification.

PERCEPTION.—Perception is an establishment of specific relations among states of consciousness.—[Principles of Psychology, Sec. 354 A.]

The perception by which any object is known as such or such, is always an acquired perception. Most of the elements contained in the cognition of an observed object, are not known immediately through the senses, but are mediately known by instantaneous ratiocination. Before a visual impression can become a perception of the thing causing it, there must be added in thought those attributes in size, solidity, quality of surface, etc., which, when united, constitute the nature of the thing as it is known to us. Though these seem to be given in the visual impression, it is demonstrable that they are not so, but have to be reached by inference. And the act of knowing them is termed acquired perception, to signify the fact that while really mediate, it appears to be immediate.

The laws relating to the perception of space, time, motion, and resistance are examined, as well as the law of perception in general.

Perception is more fully defined as a discerning of the relation or relations between states of consciousness, partly presentative and partly representative; which states of consciousness must be themselves known to the extent involved in the knowledge of their relations. Under its simplest form (a form, however, of which the adult

mind has few, if any, examples) perception is the consciousness of a single relation.

As a final result of this analysis of the intellectual faculties, it is found that all mental action whatever is definable as the continuous differentiation and integration of states of consciousness.

Passing from the foregoing special analysis to a general analysis, the laws relating to the connection of the subjective and the objective, or the *ego* and the *non-ego*, are next examined.

The author here enters into an elaborate and exhaustive examination of the various phases of idealism, as advocated by Berkeley, Hume, and others. These he directly antagonizes. He does not, however, indorse the common or "vulgar" conception in regard to the external world, which he calls "Crude Realism." He advocates a compromise system, which he designates "Transfigured Realism."

"While *some* objective existence, manifested under *some* conditions, remains as the final necessity of thought, there does not remain the implication that this existence and these conditions are more to us than the unknown correlatives of our feelings and the relations among our feelings. The Realism we are committed to is one which simply asserts objective existence as separate from, and independent of, subjective existence. But it affirms neither that any one mode of this objective existence is in reality that which it seems, nor that the connections among its modes are objectively what they seem."—[Ibid., Sec. 472.]

It is stated elsewhere (Sec. 470), that the *ego* is the principle of continuity forming into a

whole the faint states of consciousness, moulding and modifying them by some unknown energy, while the *non-ego* is the principle of continuity holding together the independent aggregate of vivid states of consciousness.

Certain corollaries follow from this general analysis.

Before proceeding to these, a distinction is taken between cognitions and feelings, and both are classified.

COGNITIONS into presentative cognitions, presentative-representative cognitions, representative, and re-representative cognitions.

In like manner, FEELINGS are classified into presentative, presentative-representative, representative, and re-representative.

DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTIONS.—Only after there have been received many experiences which differ in their kinds but present some relation in common, can the first step be taken toward the conception of a truth higher in generality than these different experiences themselves.

In the course of human progress general ideas can arise only as fast as social conditions render experiences more multitudinous and varied; while at the same time these social conditions themselves presuppose some general ideas. Each step toward more general ideas is instrumental in bringing about better and wider social co-operations; so rendering the experiences still more numerous and varied, more complex, and

derived from a wider area. And then, when the correlative experiences have become organized, there arises the possibility of ideas yet higher in generality, and a further social evolution.

The primitive man has little experience which cultivates the consciousness of what we call truth. Credulity is the inevitable concomitant of such a state.

Criticism can obtain only as fast as the intellectual powers in general develop.

In the lower stages of mental evolution imagination is feeble.

The belief that superstition implies active imagination, and that the decline of superstition results when the flights of imagination become restrained, shows a confusion of thought. This confusion has been fostered by the habitual antithesis of prose and poetry, fact and fiction. The mental evolution which accompanies civilization, makes imagination more vivid, more exact, more comprehensive, and more excursive.

A distinction is made between reminiscent imagination and constructive imagination.

**LANGUAGE OF THE EMOTIONS.**—Every feeling, peripheral or central—sensational or emotional—is the concomitant of a nervous disturbance and resulting nervous discharge, that has on the body both a special effect and a general effect. The general effect is this:

“The molecular motion disengaged in any nerve-centre by any stimulus, tends ever to flow along lines of least resistance throughout the nervous system, ex-

citing other nerve-centres, and setting up other discharges. The feelings of all orders, moderate as well as strong, which from instant to instant arise in consciousness, are the correlatives of nerve-waves continually being generated and continually reverberating throughout the nervous system—the perpetual nervous discharge constituted by these perpetually generated waves, affecting both the viscera and the muscles, voluntary and involuntary."

Every particular kind of feeling, sensational or emotional, being located in a specialized nervous structure that has relations to special parts of the body, tends to produce on the body an effect that is special.

**SOCIALITY AND SYMPATHY.**—The social instinct is observed in the lower orders of existence.

When to the general sociality of gregarious creatures there come to be added the special socialities of a permanent sexual relation, and of a double parental relation, sympathy develops more rapidly.

The genesis and explanation of egoistic sentiments is given, and of altruistic sentiments, as connected with the social system. The egoistic sentiment is partly inherited, partly acquired, being associated with the ideas of possession and enjoyment.

The altruistic sentiments are the feelings which find satisfaction in the well-being of all, and which are adjusted to a fundamental unchanging condition to social welfare.

There can be no altruistic feeling but what

arises by sympathetic excitement of a corresponding egoistic feeling.

The volume closes with a chapter on the æsthetic sentiments.

The æsthetic activities in general may be expected to play an increasing part in human life as evolution advances. While the forms of art will be such as yield pleasurable exercise to the simpler faculties, they will in a greater degree than now, appeal to the higher emotions.

In the later editions of Spencer's Psychology, the work has been not only enlarged, but in some respects re-cast; so that, as he himself says in one of his prefaces, it may be said it is more a new work than a new edition; being more than twice as large as its predecessor. How far these changes and additions may have been made for the purpose of obviating the force of adverse criticisms, it is not easy to determine; but that some of them were, is sufficiently manifest.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE NEW PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED—SPENCER'S SOCIOLOGY.

Having treated of Organic Evolution, Mr. Spencer now comes to what he terms Super-Organic Evolution.

That form of Super-Organic Evolution which human societies exhibit in their growths, structures, functions and products, is now to be considered. The phenomena to be dealt with are grouped under the general title of Sociology.

"Every society displays phenomena that are ascribable to the characters of its units and to the conditions under which they exist."

These factors or conditions are extrinsic, or external, and intrinsic, or internal.

The extrinsic factors are climate, surface, configuration of surface, vegetal productions, Flora and Fauna, etc.

The intrinsic factors are the physical characters, the degree of intelligence, and the tendencies of thought, etc., of the individual.

In addition to these, there are the progressive modifications of the environment.

The average primitive man was somewhat inferior to the average civilized man in size and physical structure.

The primitive intellect, relatively simpler, develops more rapidly and earlier reaches its limit. It is characterized by an absence of generalized knowledge, and a readiness to accept any explanation, however absurd, of surrounding phenomena.

In examining the ideas of the primitive man, it is seen that

"By minds beginning to generalize, shadows must be conceived as existences appended to, but capable of separation from, material things."

The echo was supposed to come from an invisible man who dwelt in the place from which the echo came; from one who had passed into an invisible state, or who would become invisible when sought.

**GHOSTS.**—These originated from experiences in dreams. Dream-activities were accepted as real activities. The dreamer had seen his other self, or double, and he had seen the doubles of his companions.

"This belief in another self belonging to him, harmonizes with all those illustrations of duality furnished by things around, and equally harmonizes with those multitudinous cases in which things pass from visible to invisible states, and back again."

The other self, or double, was supposed to have departed in cases of swoon, apoplexy, catalepsy, ecstasy, and other forms of insensibility.

In death, the double had gone away for a longer time, but still was expected back. This was the origin of the beliefs in resurrection.

"Let us note the still existing form of this belief. It differs from the primitive belief less than we suppose."

The author refers to the saying in the creed: "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin," as implying that death is not a natural event,

"Just as clearly as do the savage creeds which ascribe death to some difference of opinion among the gods, or disregard of their injunctions."

The facts are referred to that in the English state prayer-book,

"Bodily resurrection is unhesitatingly asserted, and poems of more modern date contain detailed descriptions of the dead rising again."

Also that a prominent English bishop had recently preached against cremation as tending to undermine the faith of mankind in a bodily resurrection.—[Principles of Sociology, Sec. 90.

"And now observe, finally, the kind of modification through which the civilized belief in resurrection is made partially unlike the savage belief. There is no abandonment of it; the anticipated event is simply postponed. Supernaturalism, gradually discredited by science, transfers its supernatural occurrences to remoter places in time or space. As believers in special creations suppose them to happen, not where we are, but in distant parts of the world; as miracles, admitted not to take place now, are said to have taken place during a past dispensation; so reanimation of the body, no longer expected as immediate, is expected at an in-

definitely far off time. The idea of death differentiates slowly from the idea of temporary insensibility. At first, revival is looked for in a few hours, or in a few days, or in a few years; and gradually, as death becomes more definitely conceived, revival is not looked for till the end of all things.”—[Ibid.

Among savage races the implication beyond doubt is, that the duplicate is at first conceived as no less material than its original. The Greek conception of ghosts seems to have been of an allied kind.

“Nor do the conceptions which prevailed among the Hebrews appear to have been different. We find ascribed, now substantiality, now insubstantiality, and now something between the two. The resuscitated Christ was described as having wounds that admitted of tactful examination, and yet as passing unimpeded through a closed door or through walls.”—[Prin. of Sociology, Sec. 93.

“Belief in reanimation implies belief in a subsequent life. The primitive man, incapable of deliberate thought, and without language fit for deliberate thinking, has to conceive this as best he may. Hence a chaos of ideas concerning the after-state of the dead.”—[Prin. of Soc., Sec. 99.

The second life is originally conceived as repeating the first in conduct, sentiments, and ethical code.

Such traits as we may perceive of the after-life of the departed Greeks, under its ethical aspect, conform to those of Greek daily life.

“Nor in the ascribed moral standard of the Hebrew other-life do we fail to see a kindred similarity, if a less complete one. Subordination is still the supreme virtue. If this is displayed, wrong acts are condoned, or

are not supposed to be wrong. The obedient Abraham is applauded for his readiness to sacrifice Isaac. There is no sign of blame for so readily accepting the murderous suggestion of his dream as a dictate from heaven."—[Prin. of Soc., Sec. 107.

The genesis of the ideas of the other world, and of heaven and hell, is traced from the ideas of another life and of the condition of departed spirits.

From ghosts to gods the transition is natural and easy. Ancestor-worship preceded, or rather accompanied, this transition. Much attention is given to idol-worship and fetichism, which, by mythological writers generally, is thought to be the earliest form of religion. Mr. Spencer, however, holds ghost and ancestor-worship to be the first stage, and fetichism the second.

Akin to these forms of superstition, is the worship of Nature; particularly in the form of sun, moon and stars.

The foregoing is given as the data of Sociology. The author now comes to what he terms the inductions of Sociology.

The question is asked, What is Society? And the answer is, a Society is an organism.

Analogies are traced between Societies and other organic structures. These analogies are found in Social Growth, Social Structures, Social Functions, Systems of Organs, the Sustaining System, the Distributing System, and the Regulating System.

The growth of Societies reminds us, by its degree, of growth in living bodies.

"The implication is, that by integrations, direct and indirect, there have in course of time been produced social aggregates a million times in size the aggregates which alone existed in the remote past."—[Prin. of Soc., Sec. 224.]

Scattered over many regions there are minute hordes—still extant samples of the primordial type of society.

"In Societies as in living bodies, increase of mass is habitually accompanied by increase of structure. . . . Changes of structure cannot occur without changes of functions."

Ceremonial and Political Institutions are considered.

The earliest kind of government, the most general kind of government, and the government which is ever spontaneously recommencing, is the government of ceremonial observance.

"That ceremonial restraint, preceding other forms of restraint, continues ever to be the most widely diffused form of restraint, we are shown by such facts as that in all intercourse between members of each society, the decisively governmental actions are usually prefaced by this government of observances."—[Prin. of Soc., Sec. 343.]

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS are preceded by political organization.

"The mere gathering of individuals into a group does not constitute them a Society. A Society, in the sociological sense, is formed only when, besides juxtaposition, there is co-operation. . . . But co-operation implies organization. . . . There is a spontaneous co-operation which grows up without thought during the pursuit of private ends; and there is a co-operation

which, consciously devised, implies distinct recognition of public ends."—[Prin. of Soc., Sec. 440, 441.

The origin and growth of political organizations are traced, as illustrative of the doctrine of evolution. Social types and constitutions and social metamorphoses are examined; also the domestic relations.

The primitive relations of the sexes—Exogamy, Endogamy, Promiscuity, Polyandry, Polygyny, Monogamy, are all carefully considered. Mr. Spencer's convictions appear to be in favor of monogamy.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONS.

**THE RELIGIOUS IDEA.**—"Rightly to trace the evolution of Ecclesiastical Institutions, we must know whence came the ideas and sentiments implied by them. Are these innate, or are they derived?.....

"There is clear proof that minds which have from infancy been cut off by bodily defects from intercourse with the minds of adults, are devoid of religious ideas. ....The implication is that civilized men have no innate tendency to form religious ideas; and this implication is supported by proofs that among various savage tribes religious ideas do not exist."—[Prin. of Soc., Sec. 583.

Since, then, religious ideas have not that supernatural origin commonly alleged, how do they originate?

Mr. Spencer thinks they originate in ancestor-worship; giving many illustrations in support of his theory. The belief in ghosts is considered, also, as having originated at or about the same time, and as accompanying ancestor-worship. Among savage races, the functions of the medi-

cine-man and priest were closely related. The eldest male descendant was originally the quasi-priest, upon whom devolved the duty of propitiating the ghosts of ancestors and of prominent chiefs. This priest was frequently, also, the ruler. Thus arose the first connection of Church and State.

As society developed the priests became segregated and co-ordinated into a separate class. They contributed in forming the social bond, and sometimes exercised functions of a civil and military character.

Thus, by a continuous process of evolution, we arrive at the ecclesiastical institutions of the present day.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE NEW PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED—PRINCIPLES  
OF ETHICS—WORK ON EDUCATION—  
ESSAYS, ETC.

### PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS.

The original work, “Data of Ethics,” was afterward enlarged into “Principles of Ethics,” consisting of

- Part I. The Data of Ethics;
- Part II. The Inductions of Ethics;
- Part III. The Ethics of Individual Life.

### PART I.—THE DATA OF ETHICS.

CONDUCT IN GENERAL, AND THE EVOLUTION OF CONDUCT.—Conduct is a whole; and, in a sense, it is an organic whole—an aggregate of interdependent actions performed by an organism. That division or aspect of conduct with which Ethics deals, is a part of this organic whole—a part having its components inextricably bound up with the rest.

Conduct, in its full acceptation, comprehends all adjustment of acts to ends. A large part of ordinary conduct is ethically indifferent.—[Principles of Ethics, Sec. 1.]

"Ethics has for its subject matter, that form which universal conduct assumes during the last stages of its evolution—stages displayed by the highest type of being when he is forced, by increase of numbers, to live more and more in presence of his fellows."—[Prin. of Ethics, Sec. 7.

**GOOD AND BAD CONDUCT.**—"The entanglement of social relations is such, that men's actions often simultaneously affect the welfares of self, of offspring, and of fellow-citizens. Hence results confusion in judging of actions as good and bad; since actions well fitted to achieve ends of one order, may prevent ends of the other orders from being achieved."—[Prin. of Ethics, Sec 8.

Always acts are called good or bad according as they are well or ill adjusted to ends. Leaving other ends aside, we regard as good the conduct furthering self-preservation, and as bad the conduct tending to self-destruction. Parental conduct is called good or bad as it approaches or falls short of the ideal result, of a progeny, useful in number and preserved to maturity, who are then fit for a life that is complete in fullness and duration. Lastly, in an associated state, that form of conduct is most emphatically termed good, which is such that life may be completed in each and in his offspring, not only without preventing completion of it in others, but with furtherance of it in others.—[Ibid.

Taking into account immediate and remote effects on all persons, the good is universally the pleasurable.—[Ibid., Sec. 10.

**WAYS OF JUDGING CONDUCT—THE PHYSICAL  
—THE BIOLOGICAL—THE PSYCHOLOGICAL—THE**

L SOCIOLOGICAL VIEW.—Mr. Spencer claims that all the various ethical theories are characterized either by entire absence of the idea of causation, or by inadequate presence of it.—[Prin. of Ethics, Sec. 17.]

"The school of morals properly to be considered as the still extant representative of the most ancient school, is that which recognizes no other rule of conduct than the alleged will of God. It originates with the savage, whose only restraint beyond fear of his fellow-man is fear of an ancestral spirit; and whose notion of moral duty, as distinguished from his notion of social prudence, arises from this fear."—[Ibid. Sec. 18.]

L The pure intuitionists hold that moral perceptions are innate in the original sense—that men have been divinely endowed with moral faculties. Even the utilitarian school is very far from complete recognition of natural causation. Conduct, according to its theory, is to be estimated by observation of results.—[Ibid., Sec. 21.]

L The PHYSICAL view is, that there is an entire correspondence between evolution as physically defined and moral evolution.

The BIOLOGICAL view is, that the moral man is one whose functions are all discharged in degrees duly adjusted to the conditions of existence. The performance of every function is, in a sense, a moral obligation.—[Prin. of Ethics, Secs. 30, 31.]

The PSYCHOLOGICAL view is, that "The pleasures and pains which the moral sentiments originate, will, like bodily pleasures and pains, become incentives and deterrents so adjusted in their strengths

to the needs, that the moral conduct will be the natural conduct."—[Ibid., Sec. 47.]

The SOCIOLOGICAL view is, that the highest life is reached only when, besides helping to complete one another's lives by specified reciprocities of aid, men otherwise help to complete one another's lives.—[Prin. of Ethics, Sec. 55.]

**EGOISM AND ALTRUISM.**—Egoism comes before Altruism. The acts required for continued self-preservation, including the enjoyment of benefits achieved by such acts, are the first requisites to universal welfare.

Altruism, defined as being all action which, in the normal course of things, benefits others instead of benefiting self, is no less essential than egoism. Self-sacrifice is no less primordial than self-preservation.

Though the principles are seemingly in conflict, yet there is a mode of conciliation.

"In its ultimate form, altruism will be the achievement of gratification through sympathy with those gratifications of others which are mainly produced by their activities of all kinds successively carried on—sympathetic gratification which costs the receiver nothing, but is a gratis addition to his egoistic gratifications."—[Prin. of Ethics, Sec. 97.]

Such a view as has been set forth

"Will not be agreeable to those who lament the spreading disbelief in eternal damnation; nor to those who follow the apostle of brute force in thinking that because the rule of the strong hand was once good, it is good for all time to come; nor to those whose rever-

ence for one who told them to put up the sword, is shown by using the sword to spread his doctrine among heathens.

"From the ten thousand priests of the religion of love, who are silent when the nation is moved by the religion of hate, will come no sign of assent."—[Ibid., Sec. 98.

Nevertheless, the author does not think it unreasonable to believe that it will eventually be acted upon.\*

#### SPENCER'S WORK ON EDUCATION.

**WHAT KNOWLEDGE IS MOST WORTH?**—The ornamental comes before the useful. The comparative worths of different kinds of knowledge have been as yet scarcely even discussed—much less discussed in a methodic way, with definite results.

The ultimate test of value of any branch of knowledge, is, of what use is it in teaching how to live?—how to minister to self-preservation—how to secure the necessities of life—how to rear and discipline offspring—how to maintain proper social and political relations, and how to be best fitted for the leisure part of life, to be devoted to the gratification of the tastes and feelings.

For all these purposes Mr. Spencer deems cultivation of the sciences indispensable. He does not concede that mental discipline requires

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\*NOTE.—This synopsis is confined to that part of the "Principles of Ethics" entitled "Data of Ethics," the fundamental principles of his doctrine of morals having been therein stated.

any different course of study from that necessary to prepare for the activities of life.

**INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION.**—The once universal practice of learning by rote, is daily falling more into discredit. Also, the nearly allied teaching by rules. The particulars first, and then the generalization, is the new method. The characteristic of the new method is, an increasing conformity to the methods of Nature. Alike in its order and in its methods, as Pestalozzi annunciated, education must conform to the natural process of mental evolution. We should proceed from the simple to the complex, from concrete to abstract, and from the empirical to the rational. Furthermore, education should be a process of self-instruction.

**MORAL EDUCATION.**—Right conceptions of cause and effect are early formed; and by frequent and constant experience are eventually rendered definite and complete. Proper conduct in life is much better guaranteed when the good and evil consequences of actions are rationally understood, than when they are merely believed on authority.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION.**—To conform the regimen of the nursery and the school to the established truths of modern science—this is the desideratum.

#### SPENCER'S ESSAYS AND OTHER WRITINGS.

Mr. Spencer's writings have been very voluminous. Besides his philosophical and miscella-

neous works, he has made contributions, from time to time, to various English magazines.

It is not within the purview of these articles to speak of his writings, other than those of which a synopsis has been given.

Suffice it to say, that no one will for a moment hesitate to accord to him the highest rank among those who have contributed to the advancement of science and have enlarged the field of philosophic thought.

Mr. Spencer appears to have passed through, and to have exemplified in his own person, the three stages of mental evolution described by Comte as the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive.

The first stage is to be seen in "Social Statics," written when Mr. Spencer was thirty years of age. In this work he writes of "God's World," of the "Divine Idea," of the "Divine Rule," of the "Divine Arrangements," of the "creative purpose," of the "Creator's silent command," etc., etc. He refers in high terms to the Christian religion, using language in marked contrast with that employed in his later writings. He has also an entire chapter on "The Moral Sense"; something which appears strangely to have dropped out of the "Data of Ethics."

In Social Statics he speaks of the moral sense as generating moral intuitions [p. 39]. In the Data of Ethics he antagonizes the intuitionists, who "hold that moral perceptions are innate—

that men have been divinely endowed with moral faculties."

In Social Statics, human rights are primarily derived from the axiom that human happiness is the divine will [p. 173], and that the duty of man is to conform to the will of God. In the Data of Ethics, the author, speaking of the ancient school of morals, "that which recognizes no other rule of conduct than the alleged will of God," says it originates with the savage.

In the first, the theological state, God was ruling the world in accordance with divine arrangements.

In the second, the metaphysical state, we have the Unknowable as the Unknown Force, the Inscrutable Power, behind all phenomena.

In the third, the positive state, the Unknowable is an abstract, philosophical conception.

The "Unknowable" was the entity of the metaphysical state, which was substituted for the divinity of the theological state. It was the "intermediaire" spoken of by Comte, which conducts one from the theological state to the positive state.

In the positive state of thought, Mr. Spencer uses the term "Nature" to designate the "Unknowable" or "Ultimate Cause of things." Nature is now the great Artificer, and the philosopher deems it sufficient to study her manifestations.

The progressive character of Mr. Spencer's thought is further illustrated by one of his very

latest utterances—his reply to Mr. Balfour's "Foundations of Belief" [1895]. Mr. Spencer there speaks of the Universe as being without conceivable beginning or end, and without intelligible purpose.

This is his last and most positive state of thought.

In the theological state, intelligence was ascribed to the Power behind phenomena.

In the metaphysical state, we were cautioned against ascribing to that Power either intelligence or the want of intelligence.

In the positive state, it is clearly implied that the same Power is without intelligible purpose. In this state, there is no Divine Will, conformity to which was so strongly enjoined in "Social Statics."

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Having thus taken a complete survey of the philosophy of Mr. Spencer, we are now prepared for an interview with his critics.

## CHAPTER IX.

CRITICISM BY MALCOLM GUTHRIE.

The most elaborate criticism of Mr. Spencer's philosophy was made by Malcolm Guthrie, in a volume of nearly 500 closely printed pages, entitled "On Mr. Spencer's Unification of Knowledge." [London, Truebner & Co., 1882.

In his preface Mr. Guthrie says:

"In so far as Mr. Spencer's work is viewed as an attempt to show the *a priori* reasonableness of evolution by gradual development, already established in various departments of science by *a posteriori* methods, it may be held to have accomplished its object; but in so far as it claims to have put together a framework of thought commensurate with all the sequences of the cosmos, it must be considered a disjointed structure, from which as yet several connected parts are missing. And it will be found that the deductive system which Mr. Spencer attempts is so mystical in its fundamental ideas, as well as so incomplete in its logical connections, that, regarded as a system of philosophy, it is as vague as it is ill-constructed . . . .

"The attempt to outrun the gradual growth of knowledge by filling in every hiatus with theoretical

explanations, is a positive obstruction to the progress of science. . . .

"The writer is not in accord with Mr. Spencer in supposing that mysticism completes explanations partially effected by intelligible methods."

Mr. Spencer has, according to Mr. Guthrie, six different methods for the unification of knowledge: the Mystical method, the Psychological method, the Physical method, the Metaphysical, the Supraphysical method, and the Symbolical method.

1. Commenting on the **MYSTICAL METHOD**, Mr. Guthrie says:

"In the book on the **Knowable**, the **Unknowable** is always presenting itself. It meets one at every turn, and each important term is a back-door into the **Unknowable**."

"The unification must be accomplished within the bounds of knowledge. If the unknowable is mixed up in it, over and beyond the known conditions—as a factor, but a factor of unknown value—then, the whole organization or co-ordination of the sciences is vitiated and comes to naught."

2. **THE PSYCHOLOGICAL METHOD**.—The criticism on this portion of Mr. Spencer's endeavor to unify knowledge, is that it is vague and meaningless.

3. **THE METAPHYSICAL METHOD**.—Commenting on Mr. Spencer's illustration of the piano, Mr. Guthrie says:

"It seems to us that the process which Mr. Spencer here proposes, is not possible. . . . The only way to fuse the various ideas connected with a piano into the

required indefiniteness of general existence would be by fusing the piano itself into general existence by grinding it into dust, and then we have no idea of a piano at all."

The remarkable passage in Spencer referred to by Mr. Guthrie will here be given in full, with so much of the context as is essential.

"How, then, must the sense of this something [that is conditioned in every thought] be constituted? Evidently by combining successive concepts deprived of their limits and conditions. . . .

"On thinking of a piano, there first rises in the imagination its visual appearance, to which are instantaneously added [though by separate mental acts] the ideas of its remote sides and of its solid substance. A complete conception, however, involves the strings, the hammers, the pedals; and while successively adding these to the conception, the attributes first thought of lapse more or less completely out of consciousness. Nevertheless, the whole group constitutes a representation of the piano. Now, as in this case we form a definite concept of a special existence, by imposing limits and conditions in successive acts; so, in the converse case, by taking away the limits and conditions in successive acts, we form an indefinite notion of general existence. By fusing a series of states of consciousness, in each of which, as it arises, the limitations and conditions are abolished, there is produced a consciousness of something unconditioned."—[First Prin., Sec. 26.

Elsewhere Mr. Spencer tells us that the Unknowable is unthinkable; but here he shows us how to think of something unknowable, giving full directions. Taking the piano as an illustration, he explains that after having formed a

complete concept of the piano, in order to get the idea of its general existence—the idea of an unconditioned piano—we must take away one by one its limits and conditions. Very well; let us remove from thought first the pedals, then the hammers, strings and dampers. Going further, let us remove from thought the solid substance of the piano, and, as a last step in the process, its visual appearance. What now remains of the piano? One would say, nothing whatever. But according to the author of First Principles, there still remains to be thought of, an indefinitely existing—an unconditioned piano.

The pedals, the strings, the hammers, etc., are parts of the piano; and that all the parts of the instrument, as well as the solid substance of which it is composed, can be taken away, and any thing be left, is a doctrine to which I cannot subscribe. All the parts are equal to the whole. When, therefore, all the parts are taken away, the entire object is gone.

Much has been said concerning the “noumenon,” as distinguished from the phenomenon; and since the noumenon is one of the many names which Mr. Spencer gives to the Unknowable, it is manifest that the noumenal piano is what he supposes to remain after the phenomenal piano is gone. The doctrine of the noumenon is that the real object, the “Ding an sich,” is the noumenon, of which phenomenon is the manifestation.

Let us look into this:

Take a piece of ice. There is the phenomenon ice, and, we will say, the noumenon ice. Now, let the ice be melted into water. The phenomenon ice is gone. It exists no longer. What has become of the noumenon ice? Will it be said it has gone into the water? But water is a phenomenon itself, and must have its own noumenon. If the noumenon ice has gone into the noumenon water, then the water has, in this case, two noumena, or a double noumenon.

Again: Let the water be decomposed into oxygen and hydrogen gas. Where, now, is or are the noumenon or noumena of the water? Has it or have they been cut in two, and has part gone into the one gas and part into the other? But each of these gases is supposed to have its own noumenon.

Take another illustration:

Take the case of a tree: It has, let us say, its noumenon. Now let the tree be felled, the top cut into fuel and burned, and the trunk sawed into boards, and used in the construction of a house. Where, now, is the noumenon of the tree, or the noumenal tree? Was it divided, and did a part go into the fuel and thence into ashes, and the other part into the boards and thence into the house? Does every board have its noumenon? Does also each of the nails that fasten the boards have its noumenon? The house, also, must it not have its own noumenon?

Is the noumenon a reality, or is it a figment of the imagination—a mere philosophico-meta-

physical abstraction—a term without signification?

If the noumenon does not continue to exist after the phenomenon has disappeared, then what use has the noumenon subserved during its existence? Will it be said that it formed the base or substratum of the phenomenon? But if the phenomenon could disappear without the aid of the noumenon, why could it not appear and continue to exist without the aid of the noumenon?

There is in the "Dictionnaire Universel" of Larousse, a beautiful passage describing the heaven (the firmament) of the peasant and the heaven of the astronomer; and closing with the statement that while the heaven of the peasant is phenomenal, the heaven of the astronomer is noumenal. ("Le ciel de l'astronome est le ciel noumenal.")

It is a fine piece of rhetoric, but as an illustration it is entirely inapplicable. The heaven of the astronomer is also a phenomenon; it is, in fact, the same as the heaven of the peasant; only, better known.

The noumenon is not the phenomenon better known. Neither is it matter; nor is it claimed to be such. Matter, in its various forms, makes itself known to our senses, and becomes the subject of scientific investigation. But the noumenon is conceded to be unknowable. Matter is something—the noumenon is nothing.

John Stuart Mill says:

"Noumena, *if they exist*, are wholly unknowable by us except phenomenally, through their effects on us."—[Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 181.]

To return to our critic. Mr. Guthrie continues his criticism as follows:

**4. THE PHYSICAL METHOD.**—After examining this method somewhat in detail, he concludes that "from the Conservation of Energy, and from the doctrine of the Conservation of the Attractive Forces, and of the Indestructibility of Matter (whatever that is), we are unable to read off the history of the cosmos;" much less can we attain to an explanation of biological processes.

**5. THE SUPRAPHYSICAL METHOD.**—By this is meant a method, not beyond the physical exactly, but superimposed upon it;

"The explanation of all the modes of physical combinations and histories, and all their associated developments."

**6. THE SYMBOLIC METHOD.**—It is  
"The peculiarity of Mr. Spencer's system that his unification of knowledge is effected by means of the discernment of the relation of unknowable entities; which entities cannot be represented in thought, and have to be symbolized by certain signs."

Mr. Guthrie thinks knowledge cannot be unified in this way.

The pith and point of an extensive criticism of Mr. Guthrie on Spencer's Biology is, that he has ignored feeling as a factor in the explanation of the processes of life.

The final estimate of Mr. Spencer's work is given by Mr. Guthrie as follows:

"With regard to Mr. Spencer's system of philosophy, taken as a whole, we come to the conclusion that, admirable as is the boldness, magnificent as is the sweep, extraordinary as is the connectiveness of his reasonings, he nevertheless fails in his vast attempt. At the same time we must admire the grandeur of the outline he has sketched, acknowledge the greater breadth of view he has given to human speculation, and appreciate the abounding wealth of suggestion displayed throughout the work, which not only enriches human knowledge, but is sure to give rise to further earnest, bold and penetrating research into the mysteries of Nature.

"At the same time we feel that, although deduction may give unity and consolidation to science, it must be mainly to experience and induction that we are to look for the solid increment of knowledge; and if ever we arrive at a final unification, which is doubtful, it must be by the patient labor of the human race through ages yet unborn."

## CHAPTER X.

### SPENCER AND JOHN STUART MILL.

Mr. Mill, who always appreciated genius, had great admiration for Spencer. This feeling was fully reciprocated by Mr. Spencer, who, in a note to the second volume of his *Psychology*, speaks of Mill as one whose agreement he should value more than that of any other thinker. And yet these great thinkers, thus highly regarding each other, and both having the benefit of the best thought of ancient and modern times, could not, as metaphysicians, think alike.

Without stopping to consider whether or not this has a tendency to place metaphysics under suspicion, let us briefly glance at some of the points wherein these philosophers differ.

Spencer, taking an abstruse and metaphysical view of space and time, considers them wholly incomprehensible. Mill, on the other hand, saw no difficulty in comprehending a definite portion of space, or even in forming by comparison a tolerably correct notion of infinite space; though infinity in itself is, of course, incomprehensible. And so of time.

Mill and Spencer differed, also, in some of the fundamentals of logic.

According to Spencer, the essential test of the validity of every proposition—that which determines it as having the highest possible certainty—is, that its negation is inconceivable. This Mr. Mill denied. The views of Mr. Spencer were put forth in an article published in the Westminster Review for October, 1853. This was, in part, a criticism on the controversy between Mr. Mill and Dr. Whewell, respecting the nature of necessary truths. Mr. Mill answered in the next edition of his "Logic"; a reply from Spencer was afterward published in the Fortnightly Review; and a rejoinder from Mill in the later editions of his Logic. The final argument of Spencer is given in the eleventh chapter of Part VII of his Psychology.

The arguments on both sides, as they appear in the respective writings, may be summarized thus:

SPENCER.—To ascertain whether, along with a certain subject, a certain predicate invariably exists, we have no other way than to seek for a case in which the subject exists without it. We conduct the search by trying to replace this invariably existing predicate by some other, or by trying to suppress it altogether without replacing it. The failure to conceive the negation is the discovery that along with the subject there invariably exists the predicate. Hence the inconceivableness of its negation is that which shows a cognition to possess the highest rank—is the criterion by which its unsurpassable validity is known.

MILL.—This cannot be a correct test, because propositions once accepted as true because they withstood this test, have since been proved false. There was a time when men of the most cultivated intellects, and the most emancipated from the dominion of early prejudice, could not credit the existence of antipodes; were unable to conceive, in opposition to old association, the force of gravity acting upwards instead of downwards. Newton held an etherial medium to be a necessary implication of observed facts; but it is not now held to be a necessary implication.

SPENCER.—The propositions erroneously accepted because they seemed to withstand the test, were complex propositions to which the test was inapplicable. No errors arising from its illegitimate application can be held to tell against its legitimate application.

MILL.—How are we to decide what is a legitimate application of the test?

SPENCER.—By restricting its application to propositions which are not further decomposable. In respect of those questions legitimately brought to judgment by this test, there is *no* dispute about the answer. From the earliest times on record down to our own, men have not changed their beliefs concerning the truths of number. The axiom that if equals be added to unequals the sums are unequal, was held by the Greeks, no less than by ourselves, as a direct verdict of consciousness from which there is no appeal. Each step in each demonstration of Euclid we accept as they accepted it, because we immediately see that the alleged relation is as alleged; and that it is impossible to conceive it otherwise.

MILL.—But it must not be forgotten that these axiomatic truths of which you speak are inductions from experience. When we have often seen and thought of two things together, and have never in any one instance seen or thought of them separately, there is by

the primary law of association an increasing difficulty, which may in the end become insuperable, of conceiving the two things apart. These inseparable associations, which constitute necessities of thought, and are regarded as axioms, are the result of experience.

SPENCER.—This view of the matter I accept in part—but I regard these *data* of intelligence as *a priori* for the individual, but *a posteriori* for that entire series of individuals of which he forms the last term. The best warrant men can have for a belief is the perfect agreement of all preceding experience in support of it; and as, at any given time, a cognition of which the negation remains inconceivable is, by the hypothesis, one that has been verified by all experiences up to that time; it follows, that at any time the inconceivableness of its negation is the strongest justification a cognition can have.

MILL.—Even if it were true that inconceivableness represents the “net result” of all past experience, why should we stop at the representative when we can get at the thing represented? If our incapacity to conceive the negation of a given supposition is proof of its truth, because proving that our experience has hitherto been uniform in its favor, the real evidence for the supposition is not the inconceivableness, but the uniformity of experience. Now this, which is the substantial and only proof, is directly accessible. We are not obliged to presume it from an incidental consequence. If all past experience is in favor of a belief, let this be stated, and the belief be openly rested on that ground; after which the question arises, what that fact may be worth as evidence of its truth.

SPENCER.—For the great mass of our cognitions we cannot employ such a method of verification, for several reasons: First, the implied enumeration of experiences, if possible, would postpone indefinitely the establishment of any conclusion as valid; second, no such enumeration of experiences is possible; and third, if

possible the warrant gained for the conclusion, could never be as great as that of the test objected to. In each successive step of an argument the dependence of the conclusion upon its premises is a truth of which we have no other proof than that the reverse is inconceivable. And if this be an insufficient warrant for asserting the necessity of the axiomatic premises, it is an insufficient warrant for asserting the necessity of any link in the argument. Logical necessity and mathematical necessity must stand or fall together.

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Whatever may be thought of this discussion, it has at least the merit of presenting an issue which is well defined and fully understood, and understood alike by the contending parties. This is more than can be said of some of the other discussions between the same parties—discussions on logical distinctions which turn to some extent upon the meaning of the terms used.

Mr. Mill was a more logical writer than Spencer, because he looked closely to the meaning of terms, and to the sense in which they are used; something which logic imperatively requires, but which Mr. Spencer, as will be seen hereafter, does not always do. Mr. Mill was an acute metaphysician; so is Mr. Spencer; and in both, as we follow the metaphysical train of thought, we see more than a mere tendency to idealism. This is owing to the attempt to subject processes of thought to the same rigid analysis that is applied to the phenomena of the physical world. Auguste Comte prudently declines the attempt. Mill, in his analysis of mind and

matter, comes to the conclusion that matter is nothing but the permanent possibility of sensations; and refuses to recognize the existence of matter, except under this definition. The conclusion of Mr. Spencer is not far different. His idealism is, however, more decided, since he distinctly asserts that the relations of co-existence, of sequence, and of difference, as we know them, do not obtain beyond consciousness.

While the mind is directed to the objective —to the investigation of the phenomena in the world about us—great thinkers substantially agree; but when it is directed to the subjective —to the world within—the ego—they disagree with each other in nearly every thing except in their doubts whether there is any other world than that which they are investigating.

## CHAPTER XI.

SPENCER AND FREDERIC HARRISON.

In the Popular Science Monthly for January, 1884, appeared an article, republished from the Nineteenth Century, written by Herbert Spencer, entitled "Religion, a Retrospect and Prospect."

Tracing the origin of religion to the belief in ghosts, Mr. Spencer distinctly recognizes the fact, that in the primitive human mind there exists neither religious idea nor religious sentiment.

Inquiring what may be inferred as to the evolution of religion in the future, he concludes that the religious idea will not disappear, but that it will continue to undergo changes.

Commenting on the changes which religious thought is undergoing and must still undergo, he says:

"The cruelty of a Fijian god, who, represented as devouring the souls of the dead, may be supposed to inflict torture during the process, is small compared with the cruelty of a god who condemns men to tortures

which are eternal. . . . Clearly, this change cannot cease until the beliefs in hell and damnation disappear. Disappearance of them will be aided by an increasing repugnance to injustice. The visiting on Adam's descendants through hundreds of generations dreadful penalties for a small transgression which they did not commit; the damning of all men who do not avail themselves of an alleged mode of obtaining forgiveness, which most men have never heard of, and the effecting a reconciliation by sacrificing a son who was perfectly innocent, to satisfy the assumed necessity for a propitiatory victim, are modes of action which, ascribed to a human ruler, would call forth expressions of abhorrence; and the ascription of them to the Ultimate Cause of things, even now felt to be full of difficulties, must become impossible. So, too, must die out the belief that a Power present in innumerable worlds through infinite space, and who, during millions of years of the earth's earlier existence, needed no honoring by its inhabitants, should be seized with a craving for praise; and having created mankind, should be angry with them if they do not perpetually tell him how great he is."

Mr. Spencer's conclusion is, that the conception of the Deity will continue to enlarge until it finally becomes merged in the consciousness of an Unknowable First Cause.

The article closes thus:

"Amid the mysteries which become more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that he is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed."

**HARRISON.**—Upon this article Frederic Harrison wrote a criticism entitled "The Ghost of Religion," which was published in the Nineteenth

Century, and republished in the Popular Science Monthly. He begins thus:

"In the January number of this review is to be found an article on 'Religion,' which has justly awakened a profound and sustained interest. The creed of Agnosticism was there formulated anew by the acknowledged head of the evolution philosophy, with a definiteness such as perhaps it never wore before. To my mind there is nothing in the whole range of modern religious discussion more cogent and more suggestive than the array of conclusions the final outcome of which is marshaled in these twelve pages. It is the last word of the Agnostic philosophy in its long controversy with theology. That word is decisive; and it is hard to conceive how theology can rally for another bout from such a *sorites* of dilemma as is there presented."

He disclaims any attempt to criticise further than to add a word concerning the "Religion" of the Unknowable. "To me," he says, "it is rather the Ghost of Religion."

He thinks the phrase "Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed" savors too much of theology. In the Athanasian Creed the Third Person "proceeds" from the First and Second.

Mr. Harrison differs from Mr. Spencer, somewhat, as to the origin of religion. He thinks that fetichism, or Nature-worship, preceded the belief in ghosts.

His strongest attack, however, is on the Doctrine of the Unknowable:

"Let us take each one of these three elements of religion—belief, worship, conduct, and try them all in turn, as applicable to the Unknowable. How mere a

phrase must any religion be of which neither belief, nor worship, nor conduct can be spoken! . . . Imagine a religion which excludes the idea of worship because its sole dogma is the infinity of nothingness.

"Although the Unknowable is logically said to be Something, yet the something of which we neither know nor conceive anything is practically nothing. . . . It would hardly be sane to make a religion out of the Equator or the Binomial Theorem. But to make a religion out of the Unknowable is far more extravagant than to make it out of the Equator. We know something about the Equator."

Mr. Harrison advocates the Religion of Humanity.

"Humanity is the grandest object of reverence within the region of the real and the known; Humanity, with the world on which it rests, as its base and environment."

SPENCER.—To this Mr. Spencer replies, in an article entitled "Retrogressive Religion."

"In days when dueling was common," says Mr. Spencer, "and its code of ceremonial well elaborated, a deadly encounter was preceded by a polite salute. Having by his obeisance professed to be his antagonist's very humble servant, each forthwith did his best to run him through the body. This usage is recalled to me by the contrast between the compliments with which Mr. Harrison begins his article, 'The Ghost of Religion,' and the efforts he afterwards makes to destroy, in the brilliant style habitual with him, all but the negative part of that which he applauds. After speaking with too flattering eulogy of the mode in which I have dealt with current theological doctrines, he does his best, amid flashes of wit coming from its polished surface, to pass the sword of his logic through the ribs of my argument, and let out its vital principle."

Mr. Spencer defends his doctrine of the Unknowable, and accuses Mr. Harrison of not being entirely fair in his representation of the doctrine.

He also defends the ghost-theory as to the origin of religion. Then, treating Harrison as an avowed advocate of Positivism, he makes an attack on the system of Comte, ridiculing Comte's ritual in the worship of Humanity.

HARRISON.—The next article of Mr. Harrison is entitled "Agnostic Metaphysics."

He states the positions of Mr. Spencer in regard to Religion, positions which he, Harrison, regards as constituting a "gigantic paradox." These are:

That the proper object of Religion is a Something which never can be known or conceived, or understood; to which we cannot apply the terms emotion, will, intelligence; of which we cannot affirm or deny personality—an Inscrutable Existence or Unknowable Cause, the Ultimate Cause, the All-Being, the Creative Power. That the essential business of Religion is to keep alive the consciousness of a mystery that cannot be fathomed; and that we are not concerned to know what effect this Religion will have as a moral agent.

"Mr. Spencer says to the theologians: 'I cannot allow you to speak of a First Cause, or a Creator, or an All Being, or an Absolute Existence, because you mean something intelligible and conceivable by these terms; and I tell you that they stand for ideas that are

unthinkable and inconceivable. But,' he adds, 'I have a perfect right to talk of an Ultimate Cause, and a Creative Power, and an Absolute Existence, and an All-Being, because I mean nothing by these terms—at least nothing that can be either thought of or conceived of; and I know that I am not talking of any thing intelligible or conceivable.'

Quoting what Mr. Spencer writes in regard to "a consciousness of a Mystery that cannot be fathomed," Mr. Harrison says:

"It would be idle to find for Religion a lower and more idle part to play in human life, than that of continually presenting to man a conundrum which he is told he must continually give up."

After again combating the ghost-theory as to the origin of all religion, Mr. Harrison closes his article with an elaborate vindication of Auguste Comte.

**SPENCER.**—In his reply, entitled "Last Words About Agnosticism and the Religion of Humanity," Mr. Spencer says:

"Those who expected from Mr. Harrison an interesting rejoinder to my reply, will not be disappointed. Those who looked for points skillfully made which either are or seem to be telling, will be fully satisfied. Those who sought pleasure from witnessing the display of literary power, will close his article gratified with the hour they have spent over it."

Mr. Spencer still further maintains his theory with regard to the ghost origin of religion. He complains of having been misrepresented by Mr. Harrison, closing thus:

"I end by pointing out, as I pointed out before, that while the things I have said have not been disproved,

the things which have been disproved are things I have not said."

**HARRISON, SUPPLEMENTARY.**—Mr. Harrison announces that he does not intend to continue the discussion and accepts Mr. Spencer's third paper as closing the debate. Nevertheless, in a short article, he takes the last word.

He had charged Mr. Spencer with knowing nothing about the philosophy of Auguste Comte; a charge which Mr. Spencer had repelled. In support of this charge, Mr. Harrison now states that Comte's writings consist of eight principal works, from 1830 to 1856. That in 1864, many years after Comte's death, and twelve years after Comte had finally settled his classification of the sciences, Mr. Spencer wrote a work on "The Classification of the Sciences; and Reasons for Dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte," throughout which work Mr. Spencer speaks of Comte as making six sciences.

"Now, in all Comte's works except the first, he makes seven sciences. The seven sciences are the A B C of Positivism. In Newton Hall, or any other Positivist school, tables of the seven sciences may be seen, and they occur in tens of thousands of Positivist publications, English and French. Yet for twenty years Mr. Spencer has gone on reprinting his 'Reasons for dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte,' without an inkling of the fact that for thirty-two years Comte's works speak of seven, not six, sciences as the foundation of his Philosophy. Mr. Spencer reprints the work last October, still with the same blunder. It is as if a writer on the British constitution persisted in talking about the four estates of the realm, or as if a man

should dissent from the Church of England on the ground of her having forty-nine Articles of Religion."

This discussion attracted much attention, both in England and in this country. Prof. Youmans spoke of the brilliant manner in which it had been conducted on the part of Mr. Garrison, and gave this as a reason why it ought to be published by Mr. Spencer's friends in this country previous to an anticipated publication by the Positivists. It was feared that such a publication on their part would give an impetus to the Positive cause.

Had Mr. Garrison confined himself to the doctrine of the Unknowable, and to the attempt to make it the basis of a religion, his superiority in the argument would have been unquestionable. By espousing the Religion of Humanity, he gave Mr. Spencer an opportunity, which he did not fail to improve, to attack and ridicule the worship of Humanity as it had been advocated and prescribed by Comte. It enabled Mr. Spencer to make use of the "argumentum ad hominem," and thus to divert attention from the severe attack which had been made upon the doctrine of the Unknowable, as a theological dogma.

NOTE.—Comte's seventh science was "Morals," which he had carved out of "Sociology." It was careless in Spencer to omit it. The omission did not, however, materially affect his criticism, which was founded on Comte's arrangement of the sciences, commencing with Mathematics, and ending with Sociology.

## CHAPTER XII.

CRITICISMS AND EULOGIUMS—WATSON—BOWNE—ROBERTSON.

“GOSPELS OF YESTERDAY—DRUMMOND; SPENCER; ARNOLD. BY ROBERT A. WATSON, M. A., London, 1888.”

The criticism of Mr. Watson, as far as Mr. Spencer is concerned, is directed entirely against the “Data of Ethics.”

It is contended that the Data of Ethics fails to present a system of morals adapted to mankind, especially in its present condition; that the intense struggle for existence renders it impossible to adopt a cool, calculating scheme of mixed egoism and altruism such as that offered by Mr. Spencer.

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“THE PHILOSOPHY OF HERBERT SPENCER. BEING AN EXAMINATION OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF HIS SYSTEM. BY B. P. BOWNE, A. B., New York, 1874.”

This book is based upon several essays which appeared in the “New Englander.” These are the titles discussed:

(80)

What is Evolution?  
 Laws of the Unknowable;  
 Laws of the Knowable;  
 Principles of Psychology;  
 The Theistic Argument.

The subjects are handled with a good deal of ability. But the work is in style highly controversial, and is marred by constant invective and numerous attempts at satire.

In summing up the doctrine of the Unknowable, the following points are taken:

"Spencer says, religion is impossible, because it involves unthinkable ideas.

"Science is possible, though it involves the same unthinkable ideas.

"God must be conceived as self-existent, and is, therefore, an untenable hypothesis."

"The fundamental Reality must be conceived as self-existent, and is not an untenable hypothesis."

"To deny a thing to thought," says Mr. Bowne, "and save it to existence, is impossible;" but this had been said before by James Martineau.

This saying of Martineau is full of meaning, and goes to the foundation of the doctrine of the Unknowable. If we cannot think of any thing as existing, then, surely, we have no right to assert its existence. The "Absolute," the "First Cause" of the New Philosophy is pronounced not only unknowable, but also unthinkable.

Cousin held that we have an immediate, intuitive knowledge of God.

This was antagonized by Sir William Hamilton, who admitted only the finite element in consciousness. In this, John Stuart Mill agreed with Hamilton. But Mill, while he held with Hamilton that the abstract idea of the Absolute and of the Infinite is only the negation of the relative and of the finite, yet maintained that "something" infinite can be conceived; as infinite space and infinite time.

Mill did not, like Spencer, claim to arrive at the existence of Infinite Being by the scientific method.

Hamilton accepted the existence of God as attested by a faculty of the human mind called belief, which he placed above reason. Spencer antagonized this theory. He, however, by another method, arrives at a First Cause, but does not call it God.

Such is the result of metaphysical speculation.

Now, if there is any such thing as a science of metaphysics, how is it that no two of four of the greatest thinkers of modern times can agree upon its first principles?

Cousin, Hamilton, Mill and Spencer all agree upon the multiplication table, from beginning to end. They agree upon all the demonstrations of Euclid. They agree upon the distance of the sun and moon from the earth, upon the constitution and arrangement of the solar system, and upon the movements of the heavenly bodies. They agree upon the elements in chemistry, and

upon the laws that govern animal life. They agree upon the first principles of all the sciences. But in metaphysics they disagree upon every thing which is most material.

When Descartes said "Cogito, ergo sum," ("I think, therefore I am,") that was science; but metaphysics, as a science, has never been able to get any further. We can assert that we exist, because we think. But the moment we ask how we think, and what it is possible to think of, we are lost in the mazes of metaphysical speculations.

So long as the most eminent thinkers of the age cannot agree upon the first principles to be applied to the thinking process—so long as they cannot agree upon the fundamental laws of thought—are we not justified in saying that there is no such thing as a science of metaphysics?

"For two thousand years," says Comte, "during which which the metaphysicians have thus cultivated psychology, they have not been able to arrive at a single proposition intelligible and firmly fixed. They are, even to-day, divided into a multitude of schools which dispute without ceasing concerning the first elements of their doctrines." (Depuis deux mille ans que les metaphysiciens cultivent ainsi la psychologie, ils n'ont pu encore convenir d'une seule proposition intelligible et solidement arrêtée. Ils sont, même aujourd'hui, partagés en une multitude d'écoles qui disputent sans cesse sur les premiers éléments de leurs doctrines.)—[Cours de la Philosophie Positive, 3me Edition, Paris, 1869, Vol. I, p 32.]

"What," asks Voltaire, "have all the philosophers,

ancient and modern, taught us? A child is wiser than they. It does not think about that which it cannot comprehend."—(Un enfant est plus sage qu'eux; il ne pense pas à ce qu'il ne peut concevoir.)—[Dictionnaire Philosophique, Article "Ame."]

Voltaire thinks that the great difficulty lies in comprehending how a being, whatever it may be, has thoughts; (de comprendre comment un être, quel qu'il soit, a des pensées.)

In another place, writing in that inimitable vein of irony for which he was so distinguished, he suggests that in every thing relating to metaphysics, we should commence by a sincere submission to the indubitable dogmas of the Church.

(Tous les articles qui tiennent à la métaphysique doivent commencer par une soumission sincère aux dogmes indubitables de l'Eglise.)

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"MODERN HUMANISTS. BY JOHN M. ROBERTSON,  
AUTHOR OF 'ESSAYS TOWARDS A CRITICAL METHOD'; 'CHRIST AND KRISHNA,' &c. London, 1891."

"Mr. Spencer undertakes to establish a final reconciliation between Religion and Science. . . . The so-called reconciliation borders very closely on the grotesque. Religion and Science are to be finally reconciled when Religion has abandoned every dogma and every positive belief, and takes the shape of a final negative proposition that Science never rejected, and has long affirmed. . . . What good has Religion, as such, ever done to Science? Forced it to admit the final mystery of things? Why, Science never denied that at any stage, and has been affirming it for centuries. . . .

"The one thing left to religion is, identification of itself with the final negative proposition of Science.

That is to say, the reconciliation of Religion and Science consists in Religion, as such, disappearing. The 'permanent peace' is attained when one combatant has eaten the other up, leaving not even the tail. . . . I object to adopting consciously the grim irony of the Spencerian formula to the effect that Religion, thus reduced to the mummy state, has been blissfully 'reconciled' with its surviving rival. The phrase recalls the rhyme about the

‘Young lady of Riga,  
Who went for a ride on a tiger:  
They returned from that ride  
With the lady inside,  
And a smile on the face of the tiger.’

“You would hardly say in her epitaph—if you set up a symbolic gravestone—that the lady and the tiger were reconciled.”

Mr. Robertson severely criticizes Mr. Spencer for his political conservatism, and his refusal to advocate any of the reforms of the day. He then closes with the following eulogy:

“And yet again, when all is said, how shall we measure our debt to the man whose wide achievement has laid the enduring foundation for this new art [the study of the order of Nature], and whose deeper and sounder teaching has given us the light which his mere temperamental bias would now shut out? Who has in our day widened and consolidated our knowledge as he has done? And what surer contribution is there than that to the reconstruction of our life? So imperishable is the service that our last words must needs be the acknowledgment of it. In the name of those who indorse all the criticism we have passed on what we reckon the perishable part of the thinker’s work, do we finally turn and say:

“Hail, spiritual Father and honored Master, who first trained us to shape our path through the forest by the eternal guidance of sun and stars! Though we now

must needs turn against the barriers you have raised, the gymnastic you yourself have given, and the woodcraft you yourself have taught, yet would we claim to hold ourselves of your great lineage still; and when we in turn grow 'wan with many memories,' it is your name and not another's that we shall hand to our children as that of the foremost founder of the new line, the greatest herald of the new age."

## CHAPTER XIII.

CRITICISMS CONTINUED—MANSEL—CAIRD—HODGSON—MAX MUELLER—SIDGWICK—JAMES MARTINEAU—MOULTON—PROFESSOR GREEN.

Most of the criticisms of these writers appeared, from time to time, in the British magazines, and were replied to by Mr. Spencer in his Essays.

**DR. HENRY L. MANSEL.**—In his “Philosophy of the Conditioned” (p. 39), Dr. Mansel says:

“Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his work on ‘First Principles,’ endeavors to press Sir W. Hamilton into the service of Pantheism and Positivism together, by adopting the negative portion only of his philosophy—in which, in common with many other writers, he declares the absolute to be inconceivable by the mere intellect,—and rejecting the positive portions, in which he most emphatically maintains that the belief in a personal God is imperatively demanded by the facts of our moral and emotional consciousness. . . . Mr. Spencer takes these negative inferences as the only basis of religion, and abandons Hamilton’s great principle of the distinction between knowledge and belief.”

Mr. Spencer denies that he takes the negative

inferences of Hamilton as the only basis of religion, and maintains that he has an indestructible positive basis for the religious sentiment.

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**REV. PRINCIPAL CAIRD.**—Dr. Caird says:

"His thesis is that the provinces of science and religion are distinguished from each other as the known from the unknown and unknowable."

Dr. Caird inquires whether the knowledge of a limit does not imply already the power to transcend it?

Mr. Spencer admits that he had himself raised that objection, and repeats what he had once said in an unpublished note:

"Instead of positively saying that the Absolute is unknowable, we must say that we cannot tell whether it is unknowable or not."

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**SHADWORTH H. HODGSON.**—“The Future of Metaphysics”; published in the Contemporary Review for November, 1872.

Dr. Hodgson, who is acknowledged by Mr. Spencer to be “a thinker of subtlety and independence,” while he speaks in the highest terms of Spencer’s science, criticizes somewhat sharply his metaphysics. After commenting on the Spencerian doctrine as to the incomprehensibility of space and time, he says:

“It is bad enough to be told by theologians or by popular philosophers that there are Noumena behind phenomena; but at least there is work for the Noumena to do; they are reservoirs of force for interfering with the laws of Nature. But to be told that there is a Noumenon behind phenomena, and that this Nou-

menon is entirely unknowable—this is a hyperbole of mysticism, a negation of negation, which it would require a greater than Hegel to comprehend."

Mr. Hodgson holds that the notion of an Unknowable Substrate or Cause, is an attenuated empirical notion, "doing duty as a metaphysical one, and occupying the field of metaphysic."

"Why," he asks, "should Mr. Spencer, with all his wealth in science, and particularly in psychology, covet the Naboth's vineyard of the metaphysicians?"

After discussing at some length the doctrines of Kant and Spencer in regard to space and time, etc., he says:

"Yet Mr. Spencer proceeds to use these inconceivable ideas as the basis of his philosophy. For mark, it is space and time as we know them, the actual and phenomenal space and time, to which all these inconceivabilities attach. Mr. Spencer's result ought, therefore, logically to be, skepticism. What is his actual result? Ontology. And how so? Why, instead of rejecting space and time as the inconceivable things he has tried to demonstrate them to be, he substitutes for them an unknowable—a something which they really are, though we cannot know it—and rejects that instead of them from knowledge."

Mr. Spencer thinks it strange that Dr. Hodgson should not be able to understand him better. He repeats what he says he has tried to make clear,

"That the consciousness of an Ultimate Reality, though not capable of being made a thought, properly so called, because not capable of being brought within limits, nevertheless remains as a consciousness that is *positive*; is not rendered *negative* by the negation of limits."

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**MAX MUELLER.**—Professor Mueller thinks Spencer's views are more nearly allied to those of Kant than to those of Locke.

To this Mr. Spencer demurs, and repeats the reasons he had previously given for dissenting from Kant. He does not agree with Kant, that space is the form of all external intuition; nor does he agree with him, that the consciousness of space continues when the consciousness of all things contained in it is suppressed; nor in the inference thence drawn, that space is an “*a priori*” form of intuition.

**SIDGWICK.**—In a review of the “Principles of Psychology,” Mr. H. Sidgwick, after quoting from Spencer his statement that

“A change in the objective reality causes in the subjective state a change exactly answering to it, *so answering as to constitute a cognition of it,*”

Remarks:

“Here the ‘something beyond consciousness’ is no longer said to be unknown, as its effect in consciousness ‘constitutes a cognition of it.’”

To which Mr. Spencer replies:

“This apparent inconsistency, marked by the italics, would not have existed if, instead of ‘a cognition of it,’ I had said, as I ought to have said, ‘*what we call* a cognition of it’—that is, a relative cognition as distinguished from an absolute cognition.”

Referring to the statement of Mr. Spencer that “our states of consciousness are the only things we can know,” Mr. Sidgwick claims that Spencer is radically inconsistent, because, in inter-

preting the phenomena of consciousness, he continually postulates, not an unknown something, but a something of which he speaks in ordinary terms, as though its ascribed physical characters really exist as such, instead of being, as Spencer claims they are, synthetic states of consciousness.

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**REV. JAMES MARTINEAU.**—Essay entitled “Science, Nescience, and Faith.” This will be found in the third volume of Martineau’s Essays.

Referring to the criticism contained in this essay, Mr. Spencer says:

“I have reserved to the last one of the first objections made to the metaphysico-theological doctrine set forth in ‘First Principles,’ and implied in the several volumes that have succeeded it. It was urged by an able metaphysician, the Rev. James Martineau, in an essay entitled ‘Science, Nescience, and Faith’; and, effective against my argument as it stands, shows the need for some development of my argument.”

In “First Principles” Mr. Spencer had said:

“If the Non-relative or Absolute is present in thought only, and a mere negation, then the relation between it and the Relative becomes unthinkable, because one of the terms of the relation is absent from consciousness. And if this relation is unthinkable, then is the Relative itself unthinkable, for want of its antithesis; whence results the disappearance of all thought whatever.”

#### MR. MARTINEAU’S CRITICISM.

“Take away its antithetic term, and the relative, thrown into isolation, is set up as absolute, and disappears from thought. It is indispensable, therefore, to uphold the Absolute in existence, as a condition of the

relative sphere which constitutes our whole intellectual domain. Be it so. But when saved on this plea—to preserve the balance and interdependence of two *co*-relatives—the Absolute is absolute no more; it is reduced to a term of relation; it loses, therefore, its exile from thought; its disqualification is canceled; and the alleged nescience is discharged.

"So, the same law of thought which warrants the existence, dissolves the inscrutableness of the Absolute."

"I admit this," says Spencer, "to be a telling rejoinder; and one which can be met only when the meanings of the words, as I have used them, are carefully discriminated, and the implications of the doctrine fully traced out."

He then proceeds to restate and elucidate the argument:

He does not, he says, commit himself to any propositions respecting the Absolute, considered as that which includes both subject and object. He prefers the term Non-relative. By that is to be understood "the totality of Being minus that which constitutes the individual consciousness present to us under the forms of relation."

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J. F. MOULTON, in the British Quarterly Review for October, 1873, and January, 1874.

In the first article Mr. Moulton attacks Spencer's position, that the first and second laws of motion are to be accepted as axioms of physical science. This position Mr. Spencer defends and maintains in an elaborate reply.

In the second article in the British Quarterly Mr. Moulton returns to the attack, which draws another reply.

"Reduced to its briefest form," says Mr. Spencer, "the argument is this:

"If definite quantitative relations [of proportionality] between causes and effects be assumed *a priori*, then the second law of motion is an immediate corollary. If there are not definite quantitative relations [of proportionality] between causes and effects, all the conclusions drawn from physical experiments are invalid."

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PROFESSOR GREEN, in the Contemporary Review for February, 1881, comments on the position of Spencer, that "the object is constituted by the aggregate of vivid states of consciousness."

Spencer denies that this is his position; saying the allegation is made "in face of the conspicuous fact that I identify the object with the nexus of this aggregate."

Professor Green says:

"And in the sequel the 'separation of themselves' on the part of the states of consciousness 'into two great aggregates, vivid and faint,' is spoken of as a 'differentiation between the antithetical existences we call object and subject.' If words mean any thing, then Mr. Spencer plainly makes the 'object' an aggregate of conscious states."

Professor Green points out that since Spencer claims that the object consists of states of consciousness, he cannot at the same time consistently say that it exists beyond consciousness.

Prof. Green here touches upon Spencer's system of idealism; a system which the author denominates "Transfigured Realism." This will be made the subject of a subsequent chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV.

CRITICISMS CONTINUED — MEARS — ATWATER —  
WYNN—STEBBINS—ALGER.

### M R. SPENCER'S RELIGION.

REVIEW IN THE BIBLIOTHECA SACRA FOR APRIL,  
1874, BY JOHN W. MEARS, ALBERT BARNES PRO-  
FESSOR OF INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL PHILOSO-  
PHY IN HAMILTON COLLEGE, N. Y.

"It is a long time since purely English philosophy has produced so able, so comprehensive and so daring a thinker as Herbert Spencer. Unlike Mr. Mill, he constructs rather than criticises. . . .

"Theoretically, indeed, not an Atheist, his philosophy denies the possibility of all practical relations between God and man, if, indeed, it be not fairly chargeable with denying the existence of any thing that could properly be called God. . . .

"His First Principles commences with an attempted reconciliation of religion and science, which is remarkable as coming from the side of science, and as proving that the pressure for such a reconciliation is felt in that quarter as well as in the other. . . .

"It is not an attempt to reconcile science with *a* religion, or with *the true* religion, but with an ultimate abstraction, void of all positive qualities, which Spencer chooses to call *the religious idea*."

After enumerating some of the claims which Mr. Spencer makes, he asks:

"What lurking postulate silently shapes and projects all these assumptions to the surface? This, consciously or unconsciously, but this certainly—that Herbert Spencer is the most religious man that the world has ever seen. In his view alone, of all mankind's, the true religion is perfectly represented. Not Moses and the prophets, not Jesus Christ himself nor his apostles, not the fathers nor the reformers, not Buddha nor Confucius, not Zoroaster nor Mohammed, approached the true knowledge of religion, which now, at last, has been attained by this modern Englishman. All were in error. The impiety of the pious is expressly denounced by Mr. Spencer. The results of what he calls science are more religious than religion. In short, the whole dust-heap of the world's religions has been sifted, and its one inconsiderable and unnoticed item of value has been detected; and he who recognizes and holds that, may, should, cast all the rest away, and he will be the real possessor of religion—and that man is Mr. Spencer. All that the world imperfectly and dimly aspired after, in its sublimest experiences, has been clearly disclosed and realized in the ontology of Mr. Spencer."

The writer here comments upon the attempt of Mr. Spencer to reduce all religious ideas to the consciousness of unknowable existence.

"And am I in a world, and have I a nature which, according to Mr. Spencer himself, points with inevitable, inexorable logic to a supreme, all-embracing Power, of whom I yet am bound by religious duty to abjure utterly all knowledge? A most monstrous perversion. . . .

"I cannot but know, I cannot but believe that I know something of God in every thing I know. Spencer himself calls him the power which the universe

*manifests* to us, the Ultimate Cause, the Ultimate Existence. I am surrounded on every hand by the methods of his manifestation; my very existence is made up of them. I am myself but one of these methods of the divine manifestation. How can he be in any sense *manifested*, if he is in every sense utterly inscrutable? Nay, all that is vast, transcendent in Nature, teaches me that he is glorious; all the objects that swell my bosom with emotions of beauty, grandeur, and sublimity, teach me that beauty, grandeur and sublimity belong to the divine nature; all that stretches out into the illimitable—and what smallest object does not?—testifies of his infinity.”

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T. H. ATWATER, IN THE PRINCETON REVIEW.—In the Review for April, 1865, appeared an article entitled “Herbert Spencer’s Philosophy—Atheism, Pantheism, and Materialism.”

The New Philosophy is antagonized as being Atheistic. Speaking of the relativity of knowledge, the writer says:

“This relativity of knowledge is perfectly consistent with a true and genuine knowledge of things as they really are. Not necessarily that we know all pertaining to them. Much remains unknown by the most accomplished botanist about the merest blade of grass. But what in the due use of our faculties we do know, we know truly. Otherwise we do not know it at all. Not to know truly, is not to know at all.”

The writer quotes from Spencer the following:

“The common notion that there is a line of demarcation between reason and instinct, has no foundation whatever in fact.”—[Psy., p. 572.

Also the following:

"There is a series of insensible steps by which brute rationality may pass into human rationality."—[Ibid. p. 573.]

From these and other doctrines contained in the New Philosophy, Mr. Atwater concludes that it is a system of Atheism.

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**PROFESSOR WYNN.**—While Professors Youmans, Fiske, and other admirers of Spencer look upon his philosophy as a system of Theism, many other writers consider it decidedly Atheistic.

For instance, Professor W. H. Wynn, of the State Agricultural College of Ames, Iowa, in the seventh volume of the *Lutheran Quarterly*, writes thus:

"Evolution and correlation are with him [Spencer] the key wherewith all the mysteries of the universe are unlocked. With Darwin conveniently on the one hand, and Bain on the other, he threads his way through the 'First Principles' of things, through æons of world formations," etc. . . . "Nor does he rest here. Civilization, with all its network of agencies and institutions, its governments, its economies, its arts, its philosophies, its religion, . . . all proceed in accordance with the same inflexible laws which rolled the nebulous masses into systems, and in due time will resolve them again into their primeval dust. It is noticeable that, amid all these stupendous generalizations, Mr. Spencer nowhere discovers a presiding mind. It is difficult to see how he could suppress the inference, but it is the special feature of his system, for which he claims the merit of originality, that he has been able to build it all up without the hypothesis of a God."

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So far as these writers undertake to make the Atheistic character of the New Philosophy a matter of opprobrium, success can only be realized among their religious readers.

As a matter of fact, they are unquestionably correct.

There is a difference of opinion as to what the word "religion" means, or ought to mean. But can there be any difference as to the meaning of the word "God"? Can there be a God without attributes and without intelligence? Will it for a moment be contended that there ever existed on the face of the earth a people who believed in and worshiped such a God?

The Agnostic says he does not know whether there is any God or not; that all he knows any thing about, outside of his own mind, is the visible and tangible universe, and the actions of organized beings; in other words, what is called phenomena. He is content to study the laws of Nature; that is, the methods according to which these phenomena co-exist and succeed one another.

Mr. Spencer goes further. He says he knows of the existence of something else—something which originated all this, and which holds it together. He positively knows that this something exists. He is more certain of its existence than he is of the existence of phenomena. He does not call it God, because he does not ascribe to it the attributes of a God. He does not believe in a God unless the Unknowable is God.

But the Unknowable is not God; therefore he does not believe in any God at all.

Mr. Spencer has not believed in a God since he passed out of the theological state of thought in which he wrote "Social Statics."

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**STEBBINS.**—In "Old and New" for October, 1870, Rufus P. Stebbins, of Ithaca, N. Y., makes two points, one on the Unknowable, one on the Knowable, of Spencer.

1. That the same law of consciousness, from which Spencer posits the Unknowable Power as First Cause, obliges him to posit it as an *intelligent* First Cause.

2. That his theory of Evolution from a nebulous mist, and Dissolution to the same, and again Evolution and again Dissolution, kept up in endless succession or rhythm, is defective in this: That to sustain this theory it would be necessary that all the motion should be changed into heat *at once*, and not in portions and through vast periods, as would be the case. This slow process would counteract and prevent any such Dissolution as would be necessary to a re-commencement of the process of Evolution.

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**W. R. ALGER.**—In the Christian Examiner for May, 1868, is a dissertation on Emerson, Spencer and Martineau, by W. R. Alger.

The writer makes a somewhat elaborate attempt to show that the doctrine of the Unknowable is Theism in its highest form.

The following paragraph will best illustrate his trend of thought:

"There is, then, no just ground for the belief which

alarms so many, that the detection of this sophism will prove fatal to morality and religion. Refrain from thinking the divine Psychology a counterpart of the human. Outline Deity no more as a man on the azure infinity—paint not his countenance in the mirror of imaginative contemplation. Still he is the One without whom the Many could not be. Still, we have for our guidance his working scheme revealed in the order and laws of the creation. The sum of the conditions necessary for the perfect evolution and maintenance of universal order and life, constitutes a symbol of authority and a body of rules not to be escaped. Whatever else goes or stays, the laws of the whole in itself and in relation to the parts, and the laws of the parts in themselves and in relation to each other and the whole, constitute the grounds of a system of religion and morality whose sanctity and sanctions are intrinsic and eternal."

## CHAPTER XV.

CRITICISMS CONTINUED — BASCOM—LILLY—BARRY—THE QUARTERLY—FAIRBAIRN.

JOHN BASCOM, LL. D., PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, IN *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA* FOR OCTOBER, 1876.

The writer holds that the evolution doctrine, carried to its legitimate results, destroys all liberty of thought or action.

"We grant that all which constitutes the dumb show, the ostensible marks, of liberty, may be present to human action under the interpretation of evolution. Motives are there; action follows upon them; the mind hesitates between them, decides between them, if you will, chooses between them; no symbol of a free action fails to appear, and to be apparently operative in its appropriate way. If, therefore, the power to use such words as 'motives,' 'devices,' 'obedience,' 'disobedience,' relieves one from the charge of fatalism, the evolutionist is not a fatalist; but if by fatalism is meant such an inclosing of rational with physical activities, such a subordination of both to immutable laws that only one result ever has been possible—has been contained in the forces actually operative—then the evolutionist is, and must be, a fatalist."

The doctrine of philosophical necessity, here alluded to by President Bascom, or, to use a word

preferred by some philosophers, philosophical "determinism," a doctrine which pervades the writings of Mr. Spencer, and is a cardinal feature of his philosophy, is one to which no thoughtful Positivist or Agnostic will object. Whatever difficulty there may be in reconciling the doctrine with actual individual freedom, cannot affect the validity of the doctrine itself, which stands on eternal foundations.

Nor can there be any reasonable doubt that this law, as maintained by Mr. Spencer, applies equally to the human mind. What guaranty have you that the first friend you meet will not thrust a dagger into your bosom? Only this guaranty: that the conduct of your friend is governed by law. If you knew all the laws that govern his action, you could tell precisely every thing he will do. You do not know them all; but you know sufficient of them to rest assured that he will not do the act referred to so long as he remains in his sane mind.

W. S. LILLY, IN THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW  
FOR MAY, 1889.

"The sentiment of a First Cause, infinite and absolute, is, according to Mr. Spencer, the eternal and secure basis of all religion. The Deity whom, hidden more or less under anthropomorphic disguises, the votaries of all creeds ignorantly worship, declares he unto them as the Unknowable.

"Now, if he is right in holding that the Absolute is out of relation to thought, he is certainly wrong in affirming *any* consciousness of it. . . . Mr. Spencer ingenuously confesses, indeed, 'the consciousness of

something which is yet out of consciousness is mysterious.'—[Prin. of Psy., Sec. 448.] The mystery is akin to one of which we read in the history of Baron Muenchausen, who, upon a certain occasion, is related to have lifted himself out of a river by his own periwig.

"Upon Mr. Spencer's own showing, only by going out of ourselves, only by transcending what he over and over again lays down dogmatically as the impassable limits of intellect, can we attain to any acquaintance with the Absolute. To affirm that a thing is, and that it is unknowable, is a contradiction in terms."

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**WILLIAM BARRY, IN THE DUBLIN REVIEW FOR APRIL, 1888.**—After treating of what the writer calls the "destructive stage" of Spencer's philosophy, he comes to the "constructive stage":

"His constructive stage opens with one of the most curious sentences ever penned by man. 'There still remains,' he says, at page 87, 'the final question—what must we say concerning that which transcends knowledge?' Say? Why, nothing, of course. What is there to say except 'I do not know.' But he goes on:

"'Are we to rest wholly in the consciousness of phenomena? Is the result of inquiry to exclude utterly from our minds every thing but the relative?' Wonderful words, and containing some of the most 'ambiguous middles' I have ever seen. Observe, all knowledge is relative, none can transcend phenomena. Yet it is now whispered in our ear that we need not 'utterly exclude from our minds' what we do not in any way know; and that we may 'believe,' though the nature of intelligence forbids, I will not say proof, but the very conception of that which we are asked to believe. . . .

"Mr. Spencer is the one conspicuous thinker, at any rate, in our time, who has proposed to reconcile religion and philosophy by means of an axiom which makes both impossible. . . .

"Between thought and being, Mr. Spencer fixes an

infinite gulf. That which is, he declares to us, cannot be known. To him the meeting-place of religion and philosophy is not a Divine Intuition, but eternal nescience. Thought can solve no problems, not even its own; or more truly, it is made to confess that its own problem is forever insoluble."

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**THE QUARTERLY.**—In the Quarterly for October, 1873, was a review of Spencer's Psychology, then lately published, and of "First Principles," published in 1867, and "Essays," in 1868.

In this article, it is claimed that the new system of philosophy involves the denial of all truth.

The writer says:

"That we can know nothing but phenomena, that every thing absolute escapes us—as being forever unknowable, and beyond the ken of the human intellect—is a cardinal principle with Mr. Spencer, who distinctly tells us that all 'objective agencies' productive of 'subjective affections' are not only 'unknown,' but also 'unknowable.'

"But every philosophy, every system of *knowledge*, *must* start with the assumption (implied or expressed) that something is really 'knowable'—that something is absolutely true. . . . Either this system of philosophy itself is relative and phenomenal only, or it is absolutely and objectively true. But it must be merely phenomenal if every thing known is merely phenomenal. Its value, then, can be only relative and phenomenal—that is, it has no absolute value, does not correspond with objective reality, and is therefore false. But if it is false that our knowledge is only relative, then some of our knowledge must be absolute; but this negatives the fundamental position of the whole philosophy. . . .

"Every assertor of such a philosophy must be in the

position of a man who saws across the branch of a tree at a point between himself and the trunk."

This criticism concerning the relativity of knowledge, which, as will be seen in a subsequent article, was also very cogently urged by Mr. Brownson, has reference only to the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge as held by Mr. Spencer; that is, that all knowledge is related to the Unknowable Absolute. The criticism has no application to the relativity of knowledge in the sense that all our knowledge comes through cognizing the relations between phenomena.

"The best example," says this writer, "that can be adduced of pure, unprejudiced, and yet learned and cultivated human reason, is furnished by the mind of Aristotle."

PRINCIPAL FAIRBAIRN IN THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW FOR JULY, 1881.—Principal A. M. Fairbairn, in criticising the doctrine of the Unknowable, speaks of the consciousness from which the Absolute is posited, as follows:

"For example, Mr. Spencer describes it as 'the abstract of *all* thoughts, ideas, or conceptions.'—[First Prin., p. 95.] This abstract he represents as formed 'by combining successive concepts deprived of their limits and conditions.'

"This is certainly not a very luminous remark in the mouth of one who had so strenuously reasoned that 'to conceive was to condition, to limit.' But such as it is, there it stands. What does it mean? That by removing the conditions or limits under which individual objects are conceived, there remains 'the indef-

inite thought' of the unlimited. . . . Abolish the conditions and limits under which a given thing is conceived, and what remains? Has an object (our author being witness) any being to thought save as conditioned or limited? . . .

"What exists to consciousness is known; speech of it is possible only where knowledge is. . . . It is impossible to place cause and effect in relation, and then declare the cause non-relative. It is as impossible to affirm a consciousness of the Absolute, and then declare it unknown. . . . Declare this Power unknown, and we must divorce it from all relation to the universe and consciousness, to the phenomena alike of nature and of mind. . . . Outside thought it is impossible for thought to get, for every symbol it uses has been framed by its own act and is the result of its own processes.

"While Mr. Spencer grandly dismisses all religious systems as 'unthinkable hypotheses,' he does not mean man to be without a religion. As he boldly essays the reconstruction of the universe, it is but proper that he should introduce man to a new deity, and inaugurate a religion conformable to the new order. And what so fit as that this novel deity should be the extraordinary entity or non-entity which he has so variously named the Unknown, the Unknowable, the Ultimate Reality, the Unconditioned Cause, the Inscrutable Power, the Absolute, the Non-relative, the Unconditioned Being, and the Unknown Force. This polynomic, extensively described, but indescribable Something is to be the God of the future, and awe for this multifarious and multinomial inscrutability, its religion. . . .

"We cannot reverence, or love, or obey, or worship the Unknown; these imply that we know the object, and are known to it; that it possesses the moral qualities that can awaken our reverence and love, and command our obedience and worship. . . .

"But let this transfigured religion of omniscient Agnosticism be tried by a simpler test—is it capable of realization, of practical embodiment?

"I confess to a secret regard for the Religion of Humanity. It has moral passion and purpose in it, is capable of creating and directing enthusiasm for the rights and liberties and against the wrongs and oppressions of man. But this religion of Agnosticism, this humiliation of the reason before a blank abstraction, created by thought to paralyze thought, is but an insult to the spirit, an insolent yet feeble mockery of the hopes, the loves, the ideals, the inspirations, the consolations and reverences, that have been at once symbolized for our race and realized in it, by the grand old thing named Religion."

## CHAPTER XVI.

CRITICISMS CONTINUED—REVIEW BY ORESTES A.  
BROWNSON,

In the Catholic World for February, 1872, appeared an article entitled “The Cosmic Philosophy”; the same being a review of the second edition (1871) of Spencer’s “First Principles.”

The writer summarizes the doctrine of the Unknowable, and examines the assertion that all knowledge is relative, and the positing of a Something underlying phenomena of which they are the appearances. “But this Infinite Something, which is the reality of the cosmos, is absolutely unknowable, and even unthinkable. How, then, can it be asserted?”

Both religion and science, says Mr. Spencer, agree that the Infinite Reality, or Something, is absolutely unknowable—absolutely inscrutable. “Consequently the ultimate scientific ideas are identical with the ultimate religious ideas. Both religion and science are fused together, and reconciled without any compromise, and the old feud between them extinguished in the bosom of the infinite unknowable.

‘He makes a solitude and calls it peace.’ ”

The cosmists, "by asserting that only phenomena are cognizable, and subjecting man to the common cosmic law, include him in the cosmic phenomena, and make him simply an appearance, or manifestation of the unknowable, without any real or substantive existence of his own.

"Furthermore, by declaring the phenomenal cannot be thought in and by itself without the Infinite Something that underlies it as its ground or reality, and then declaring that something to be unknowable, unthinkable even, the new system declares that there is no knowable, and consequently no science or knowledge at all. The new system of philosophy, then, reconciles science and religion only in a universal negation; that is, by really denying both. This can hardly satisfy either a scientist or a Christian."

"Mr. Spencer starts with the assumption that all religions, including Atheism, have a verity in common as well as an error. . . . But what verity is common to truth and falsehood, to Theism and Atheism? The verity common to religion and science, that the solution of the cosmic mystery is unknowable? But that is not a verity; it is a mere negation, and all truth is affirmative."

The writer rehearses what Mr. Spencer says respecting the three suppositions which may be made concerning the origin of the universe: that it is self-existent, or that it is self-created, or that it is created by an external agency. "The second supposition he rejects as the pantheistic hypothesis; which is a mistake, for no Pantheist or any body else asserts that the universe creates itself. The Pantheist denies that it is created at all; and the philosopher denies

that it creates itself; for, since to create is to act, self-creation would require the universe to act before it existed. . . .

"The first supposition, the self-existence of the universe, the author denies, not because the universe is manifestly contingent and must have had a beginning, and therefore a cause or creator; but because self-existence is absolutely inconceivable; an impossible idea. He says: . . . '*self-existence is rigorously inconceivable*, and this holds true, whatever be the nature of the object [subject] of which it is predicated. Whoever argues that the atheistical hypothesis is untenable because it involves the impossible idea of self-existence, must perforce admit that the theistical hypothesis is untenable if it contains the same impossible idea.' But who ever argued that the atheistical hypothesis is untenable because it involves the idea of self-existence? Atheism is denied because it asserts the self-existence of that which cannot be, and is known not to be, self-existent.

"But it is evident that the author rejects alike self-existence and creation; that the cosmos is self-existent, or that it is created by an independent, self-existent and super-cosmic creator. How, then, can he assert the existence of the cosmos, real or phenomenal, at all? The cosmos either exists or it does not. If it does not, that ends the matter. If it does, it must be either created or self-existent; for the author rejects an infinite series as absurd, and self-creation as only an absurd form of expressing self-existence. But as the author denies self-existence, whatever the subject of which it is predicated, and also the fact of creation, it follows rigorously, if he is right, that the cosmos does not exist. The author cannot take refuge in his favorite *nescio*, or say, we do not know the origin of the cosmos, for he has positively denied it every possible origin; and therefore has, by implication, denied it all existence.

"The Comtists restrict, in theory, all knowledge to sensible things, their mutual relations, dependencies, and the conditions and laws of their development and progress; but they at least admit that these may be objects of science and positively known. But our cosmic philosopher denies this, and asserts the relativity of all knowledge. . . . But relative knowledge [in Mr. Spencer's sense] is simply no knowledge, because in it nothing is known. . . . The relativity of all knowledge, then, is simply the denial of all knowledge. It is idle, then, for Mr. Spencer to talk of science."

"Mr. Spencer labors hard to prove the relativity of all knowledge. He either proves it or he does not. If he does not, he has no right to assert it; if he does, he disproves it at the same time. If the proof is not absolute, it does not prove it; if it is absolute, then it is not true that all knowledge is relative; for the proof must be absolutely known, or it cannot be alleged. We either know that all knowledge is relative, or we do not. If we do not, no more need be said; if we do know it, then it is false, because the knowledge of the relativity of knowledge is itself not relative. The assertion of the relativity of all knowledge, therefore, contradicts and refutes itself. No man can doubt that he doubts, or that doubt is doubt, and therefore universal doubt or skepticism is impossible, and not even assertable. The same argument applies to the pretense that all knowledge is relative.

"Rejecting creation, the author cannot assert the relation of cause and effect; rejecting cause and effect, he cannot assert even the cosmic phenomena. They are not able to stand on their own bottom, and therefore not at all, unless the Something of which they are, as he says, manifestations, is a cause producing and sustaining them. We submit, then, that Mr. Spencer's doctrine of the unknowable, and the relativity of all knowledge, estops him from asserting any thing as

knowable, for it really denies all the knowable and all the real—*omne scibile et omne reale.*”

In the second part of Mr. Spencer’s work on “The Knowable,” “the cosmos is a ceaseless evolution; is, so to speak, in a state of perpetual flux and reflux, in which diffusion of one group of phenomena is followed by the birth of another, in endless rotation, or life from death, and death from life. Dissolution follows concentration ‘in eternal alternation,’ or both go on together.

“This is not a new doctrine, but substantially the doctrine of a school of Greek philosophers, warred against both by Plato and Aristotle, that all things are in a state of ceaseless motion, of growth and decay, in which corruption proceeds from generation, and generation from corruption, in which death is born of life, and life is born of death. Our cosmic philosophers only repeat the long since exploded errors of the old cosmists. But pass over this.

“The author is treating of the knowable. We ask him, then, how he contrives to know that there is any such evolution as he asserts. . . . Does he know that he is only a certain concentration of matter and force resulting from a certain diffusion or loss of motion? Can he not only think but prove it? But all proof, all demonstration, as all reasoning, nay, sensible intuition itself, depends on the principle of cause and effect; for, unless we can assert that the sensation within is *caused* by some object without, that affects the sensible organism, we can assert nothing outside of us, not even a phenomenon or external appearance. How does the author know, or can he know, that he differs from the ape only in the different combination of matter, motion and force?

“Mr. Spencer, in his work on ‘Biology,’ asserts that

life results from the mechanical, chemical, and electrical arrangement of the particles of matter. If this were so, it would, on the author's own principles, explain nothing. It would be only saying that a certain group of phenomena is accompanied by another group, which we call life, but not that there is any causal relation between them. That the supposed arrangement of the particles of matter originates the life, Mr. Spencer cannot assert without the intuition of cause, and causes he either denies or banishes to the unknowable.

“Mr. Spencer protests against being regarded as an Atheist, for he denies the self-existence of the universe, and neither affirms nor denies the existence of God. But Atheist means simply *no-theist*; and, if he does not assert that God is, he certainly is an Atheist. It is not necessary, in order to be an Atheist, to make a positive denial of God. . . . What is asserted is not God, and is not pretended to be the God of theism, but the reality or substance of the cosmos, and indistinguishable from it. It is the real, as the phenomena are the apparent, cosmos.

“The author denies that he is a Pantheist, for he denies the hypothesis of self-creation; but, if he is not a Pantheist, it is only because he does not call the unknowable infinite power or being which he asserts as the reality of the cosmos, that is, the real cosmos, by the name of God, *Deus*, or *Theos*. But, asserting that power as the reality or substance of the cosmic phenomena, is precisely what is meant by Pantheism. . . .

“The only difference between Atheism and Pantheism is purely verbal. The Atheist calls the reality asserted, cosmos or Nature, and the Pantheist calls it God; but both assert one and the same thing.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### CRITICISMS BY PROFESSOR BIRKS AND MONSIEUR LITTRÉ.

PROFESSOR BIRKS.—“First Principles” was criticised in 1876, by Professor Thomas Rawson Birks, of Cambridge, England.

The Professor criticizes severely some of Mr. Spencer’s statements in regard to the forces of attraction and repulsion, denying that matter can both attract and repel by the same law.

Quoting from Mr. Spencer the statement that “the widest, deepest, and most certain of all facts is that the Power which the universe manifests to us, is wholly inscrutable,” the Professor thus comments thereon:

“Such, briefly, is the sum of the whole doctrine; and it contains five or six self-contradictions. . . . That it exists; that it is not an attribute, but either thing or person; that it is one person or thing, and not many; that it is distinct from the universe which manifests it; that it is really manifested by the universe; that it is a Power and not a mere Impotence; are six truths affirmed concerning it in the very definition which speaks of it as utterly inscrutable and unknown.

"And if we add to these the statements which presently follow, that it stands in a relation of contrast to the Relative, (p. 91,) that it is 'the persistent body of a thought to which we can give no shape, and the object of an irresistible belief,' (p. 93,) that it is 'a something, the concept of which is formed by combining many concepts, deprived of their limits and conditions,' (p. 95,) that it is 'an actuality lying behind appearances,' (p. 97,) that it is in such close relation to the relative realities, that every change in one may be viewed as representing an answering change in the other, so that the relatives and absolutes are practically equivalent, (p. 162,) and finally, that more or less constant relations in the absolute beyond consciousness are matter of experience, and generate like relations in our states of consciousness, (Test of Truth, p. 548,) we may see the force of Mr. Mill's satirical remark, that the doctrine recognizes as attainable a surprising and almost prodigious amount of knowledge of the Unknowable."—[Modern Phys. Fat., etc., pp. 26, 27.]

Coming to the department of Physics, and the discussion of the laws of Force, Professor Birks gives eleven different hypotheses of scientists in regard to the composition of matter.

The Professor affirms that all these theories agree in offering a hypothesis more or less definite, and capable of becoming the subject of mathematical reasoning and calculation.

"The doctrine laid down in the 'First Principles' has a character precisely opposite. It is a physical theory composed simply of abstract, metaphysical terms, that may be applied indifferently to a thousand varying hypotheses, and cannot therefore advance us a single step in the path of genuine discovery. But it has a still worse fault. It is not only vague and indefinite, but self-contradictory."

Professor Birks points out seventeen maxims upon which he says Mr. Spencer insists in his theory of the constitution of matter. After specifying these in detail, he says that all but two are untrue, self-contradictory, or absurd.

Quoting from Mr. Spencer the following: "Matter cannot be conceived except as manifesting forces of attraction and repulsion; we are obliged to think of all objects as made up of parts that attract and repel each other;" Professor Birks proceeds:

"Here we have been told, just before, that we cannot decide whether the phenomena of change arise from both attractions and repulsions, or from one of these two kinds of force only. And now we are told the exact reverse, that we are obliged to believe in that duality of the action of force which has just been pronounced to be beyond the range of our knowledge, and to be inconceivable. This constant oscillation and confusion of thought is most wearisome and vexatious for any reader who desires really to gain insight into the questions in debate."—[Mod. Ph. F., p. 208.]

The passage in "First Principles" concerning central forces had, previous to this attack, been severely criticised. It was omitted in the later editions.

In an Appendix to one of these editions of "First Principles," Mr. Spencer explains why he had omitted the passage in question from the later editions. He says that the passage was suppressed to remove a stumbling-block out of the way of future readers, and to deprive opponents of the opportunity of evading the

general argument of the chapter by opening a side-issue on a point not essential to its argument.

Moreover, Mr. Spencer denies that he asserted that there were any central forces of matter acting or manifesting themselves in the way stated. He says that what was included in his assertion, was,

"That *given* a central force, and such is the law according to which it will vary. Nothing is said concerning the existence of any central force."

And in illustration of his argument, he asks:

"When I assert that of the heat radiating in all directions from a point, the quantity falling on a given surface necessarily decreases as the square of the distance increases, do I thereby assert the necessary existence of the heat which conforms to this law?"

An ordinary thinker would reply:

"Yes, you do. You are here referring to a law which is supposed to have been established from observations and experiments on the action or manifestation of heat. If there is no heat, there is no law of heat. If you assert the law, you by necessary implication assert the existence of heat."

Because Professor Birks so understood him, Mr. Spencer thinks he did him great injustice. He says:

"My proposition—central forces vary universally as the squares of the distances, he actually transforms into the proposition—there is a cosmical force which varies inversely as the squares of the distances."

Well, was not Mr. Spencer writing about a cosmical force? Whatever might be his views

as to the nature of force, he here, by necessary implication, asserts its existence.

His argument that the statement of a law in physics does not necessarily imply the existence of that of which the law is asserted, is as if he were to say, when speaking of the evolution of society: "I do not mean by this to assert that there is any such thing as a society; but only, if there were a society, this is the way in which it would be evolved." Or, "Given a society, and this would be the law of its evolution."

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#### CRITICISM BY MONS. LITTRE.

Mons. E. Littré, the eminent French philologist and philosopher, in his preface to the 'Cours de Philosophie Positive' of Auguste Comte, has occasion to refer to the philosophy of Mr. Spencer.

He says that M. Laugel considers Spencer as belonging to the Positivist school, while at the same time speaking of him as a metaphysician.

"These two qualifications," says M. Littré, "are incompatible. He who is a metaphysician is not a positivist—he who is a positivist is not a metaphysician."

M. Littré quotes M. Laugel as saying of Mr. Spencer that "he divides the objects of human thought into two categories: that which can be known, and that which cannot be known; the Knowable and the Unknowable." (Ce qui peut être connu, et ce qui ne peut pas

etre connu; le cognoscible et l'incognoscible.) M. Laugel then states the doctrine of reconciliation of religion and science.

Commenting on these extracts, M. Littré says:

"There is confusion here, so that one cannot, I fear, keep his word either with faith or science. The confusion is in the assimilation made between the object of faith and the result of science.

"To my mind," continues M. Littré, "a union which brings together the two Unknowables under one head is more nominal than real; the Unknowable of faith being the object itself of faith, and the Unknowable of science being a limit at which one is stopped. To be an object, or to be a limit, are two ideas entirely distinct. (*Etre objet ou être limite sont deux notions très distinctes.*) . . .

"The unknowable is really the unknown; and *upon the unknown no one can base anything.* (*Sur l'inconnu nul ne put rien fonder.*) From the side of the *Knowable* has come progress, and consequently its social regime." (C'est du côté du *cognoscible* qu'ont passé les progrès et par conséquent leur régime social.)

"From all time, faith has determined the Unknowable; that is to say, has taught the beginning and end of things. This instruction should preserve its character or lose it.

"If it should preserve it, since science declares the Unknowable indeterminable, the result would be just what it really is, division and conflict. The reconciliation which Mr. Spencer supposes to come from the Unknowable cannot be effected.

"If, on the contrary, faith renounces its determinations, its instruction loses its character; it becomes confounded with that of science. There is, not conciliation, but absorption. Then it can complain that there has

been given it an empty word in place of its realities; (*un mot vide en place de ses réalités;*) and that in the variable limit which science designates the unknowable, it does not obtain even a faint glimmering of what it believes and hopes.

"Mr. Spencer has well perceived how he has been led to determine the Unknowable; calling it *that power of which the universe is the manifestation*; while declaring inconsequent and contradictory any assertions whatever relative to its nature, its acts, its motives. Nothing shows better than this the impossibility of the attempted reconciliation. (Rien ne montre mieux que ceci l'impossibilité de la conciliation tentée.) . . . .

"The attempt to confound the Unknowable of science with that of faith has, then, suffered shipwreck (a donc échoué)."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

CRITICISMS CONCLUDED.—WILFRED WARD—ST.  
GEORGE MIVART—A. J. BALFOUR.

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### THE CLOTHES OF RELIGION.

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WILFRED WARD, IN THE NATIONAL REVIEW FOR JUNE, 1884.—Referring to the discussion between Messrs. Spencer and Harrison, the writer, after quoting from one of Mr. Harrison's articles, says:

"This is, to my mind, quite unanswerable common sense. Mr. Spencer has no right—has, indeed, no logical power—to have his cake after he has eaten it. . . . To suppose that by dressing up nothing he can make it something—. . . to conceive that out of the statements 'nothing can be known,' and a sort of a something exists beyond our knowledge, we can evolve the absolutely certain existence of an unknowable object of worship, consisting of an Infinite and Eternal Energy whence all things proceed, is to introduce a new species of Evolution which Mr. Spencer himself could hardly sanction when in his right mind. The leap is very great; and Darwin confesses that 'Natura non facit saltum.' (Nature makes no leaps.)

The writer claims that the Religion of Hu-

manity, advocated by Harrison, is no better than the Religion of the Unknowable of Spencer.

"The truth seems to be that these philosophers, having conspired together to kill all religion—the very essence of which is a really existing personal God, known to exist, and accessible to the prayers of His creatures—and having, as they suppose, accomplished their work of destruction and put Religion to death, have proceeded to divide its clothes between them.

"The saying of the Psalmist, which was applied to other slayers of their God, may be used of these also—'Diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea et super vestem meam miserunt sortem.' (They parted my garments among them and upon my vesture they cast lots.)

"The ideas of Infinity, Eternity, and Power, which have hitherto clothed the Deity, fell to Mr. Spencer's share; together with the correlative emotion of awe. Mr. Harrison came in for a larger quantity. . . . Brotherly love, the improvement, moral, mental and material, of our fellow-men, self-sacrifice for the general good, devotion to an ideal—here are some of the 'clothes of religion' which Mr. Harrison and the Positivists have appropriated. . . .

"Mr. Spencer dresses up the Unknowable with Infinity, Eternity, and Energy; Mr. Harrison dresses up Humanity with Brotherly Love and the worship of an Ideal. But the clothes won't fit. The world may be duped for a time, and imagine that where the garments are, there the reality must be; but this cannot last. It is not the cowl that makes the monk, and it is not the clothes that make religion."

ST. GEORGE MIVART IN THE DUBLIN REVIEW.—An elaborate and exhaustive criticism of Spencer's Psychology appeared in the Dublin Review at various times during the years extend-

ing from 1874 to 1880. It consisted of nine parts, and was entitled "An Examination of Mr. Herbert Spencer's Psychology." Part I was published in the October number, 1874, and Part IX in the January number, 1880.

Mr. Mivart antagonizes Spencer's Psychology in important points.

In the fourth article, published in the April number, 1877, in closing his criticism on the first volume, he says:

"This first volume, therefore, full as it is of ingenious and suggestive physiological thoughts, and admirable as a thesaurus of explanations of brute psychisms, leaves the arguments for the radical distinctness of intellect from sensation, not only unimpaired, but reinforced."

After reviewing the first part of the second volume, he says:

"At the end of these eight chapters, we must, then, (as it appears to me,) recognize the futility of Mr. Spencer's attempt to reduce the reasoning process to even an intellectual reflex comparison of relations as such; *a fortiori*, then, he fails to reduce it to that sort of automatic action which he seems alone to recognize."

**THE FOUNDATIONS OF BELIEF: BY RT. HON. A. J. BALFOUR, LONDON, 1895.**—"Where the physicist assumes actual atoms, and motions, and forces, Mill saw nothing but 'permanent possibilities of sensation,' and Spencer knows nothing but the 'Unknowable.' "

Speaking of the Unknowable, Mr. Balfour says:

"For any thing I am here prepared to allege to the contrary, this may be real enough; but unfortunately, it has not the kind of reality imperatively required by science. It is not in space. It is not in time. It possesses neither mass nor extension, nor is it capable of motion. Its very name implies that it eludes the grasp of thought, and cannot be caught up into formulæ. Whatever purpose, therefore, such an 'object' may subserve in the universe of things, it is as useless as a 'permanent possibility' itself to provide subject-matter for scientific treatment.

"If these [the 'Unknowable' of Spencer and the 'permanent possibilities of sensation' of Mill] be all that truly exist outside the circle of impressions and ideas, then is all science turned to foolishness, and evolution stands confessed as a mere figment of the imagination. Man, or rather 'I', become not merely the centre of the world, but *am* the world. Beyond me and my ideas there is either nothing, or nothing that can be known. The problems about which we disquiet ourselves in vain, the origin of things and the modes of their development, the inner constitution of matter and its relations to mind, are questions about nothing, interrogations shouted into the void. The baseless fabric of the sciences, like the great globe itself, dissolves at the touch of theories like these, leaving not a rack behind."—[Foundations of Belief, pp. 125, 126.]

Commenting on what Mr. Spencer says as to the conclusions of Science, Mr. Balfour quotes:

"To ask whether science is substantially true, is [he observes] much like asking whether the sun gives light?"—[First Prin., p. 19.] It is, I admit, very much like it. But then, on Mr. Spencer's principles, *does* the sun give light? After due consideration, we shall have to admit, I think, that it does not. For it is a statement which, if made intelligently, not only involves the comprehension of matter, space, time, and

force, which are, according to Mr. Spencer, all incomprehensible; but there is the further difficulty that, if his system is to be believed, ‘what we are conscious of as properties of matter, even down to weight and resistance, are but subjective affections produced by objective agencies which are unknown and unknowable.’—[Prin. of Psy., Vol. II, p. 493.]

“It would seem, therefore, either that the sun is a ‘subjective affection,’ in which case it can hardly be said to ‘give light’; or, it is ‘unknown,’ and ‘unknowable,’ in which case no assertion respecting it can be regarded as supplying us with any very flattering specimen of scientific certitude.”—[Foundations of Belief, p. 295.]

To this Mr. Spencer replies by saying that Mr. Balfour holds the same view; citing page 284 of Balfour’s “Foundations of Belief.”

But all that Mr. Balfour there says is that when two friends “read together the same description of a landscape,” it does not “stir within them precisely the same quality of sentiment, or evoke precisely the same subtle associations,” arguing thence that if no representation of the splendors of Nature can produce in us any perfect identity of admiration, we cannot expect the definitions of theology or science to produce in us any perfect identity of belief.

It certainly seems difficult to discover, in any thing that is here said by Mr. Balfour, sufficient to justify the statement that he holds the same view as Spencer in regard to “ultimate scientific ideas.” The point was whether Mr. Spencer, in accordance with the principles of his philosophy, had sufficiently recognized the objective

existence of the material world. There is assuredly no admission that he had done so in what Balfour had said concerning the different effect which the same description of a landscape would have upon two individuals.

So far from agreeing with Mr. Spencer in his view as to the entire unreliability of sense perceptions, Mr. Balfour says:

"By the very constitution of our being we seem practically driven to assume a real world in correspondence with our ordinary judgments of perception.'—[Foundations of Belief, p. 255.

The fact that two persons are differently affected by the contemplation of a landscape, so far from proving that the landscape itself is merely a subjective affection of each, or a state of his consciousness, proves directly the reverse: that the landscape is there, and that the two persons are differently affected by it because they are themselves differently constituted. On the other theory there would be two landscapes, while now there is but one. They are both looking at the same landscape. Where one sees water the other sees water; where one sees trees the other sees trees; and where one sees a mountain the other sees a mountain; though these objects, either in themselves or when grouped together, may make a somewhat different impression upon each.

The fact that the two persons see at the same time and in the same place, what they find in conversation to be in its outline and general fea-

tures the same landscape, proves that the landscape itself, as they know it, exists or obtains beyond the consciousness of either. They know it was there before they saw it, and they know that after they shall have ceased to look upon it, it will still remain in the same portion of universal space.

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The criticisms quoted in this work, taken together, constitute a symposium of the views of some of the best writers and most profound thinkers of the latter half of the present century—representatives of all shades of opinion, from the Positivist and Agnostic to the Deist and the Christian; also of both phases of Christian belief, Catholic and Protestant.

The few chapters that remain will be devoted to an examination of the Spencerian metaphysical philosophy, with particular reference to the doctrine of the Unknowable, and to the claim that is made that that doctrine has effected a reconciliation between Science and Religion.

In pursuing this examination, the writer hopes at least to be able to make his statements intelligible. Any thing in metaphysics which is reasonable and true ought to be capable of being brought home to the comprehension of every careful and thoughtful reader.

## CHAPTER XIX.

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### SPACE AND TIME—CONSCIOUSNESS.

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#### SPACE AND TIME.

Speaking of space and time, Mr. Spencer says:

"To say that space and time exist objectively, is to say that they are entities. The assertion that they are non-entities is self-destructive: non-entities are non-existences; and to allege that non-existences exist objectively, is a contradiction in terms."—[First Principles, Sec. 15.

Since, therefore, we

"Cannot conceive of space and time as entities, and are equally disabled from conceiving them as either the attributes of entities or non-entities," and since "we are compelled to think of them as existing and yet cannot bring them within those conditions under which existences are represented in thought, the conclusion is that space and time are wholly incomprehensible."—[Ibid.

Is there not an unnecessary difficulty here raised by the ambiguous use of the terms "exist" and "existences"? Existence is here used as synonymous with entity; being; substance; and a

non-entity is declared to be a non-existence. But "exist" has another meaning equally legitimate, that is, "to manifest itself; to continue to be." In this sense space and time exist objectively. They are manifested; they continue to be.

Again:

"Of space and time we cannot assert either limitation or the absence of limitation."

Is this correct? On the contrary, do we not, every day, in the ordinary transactions of life, assert limitation both of space and time? Of space we assert limitation every time we make a measurement of any portion of the space about us, for any purpose whatever. And of time we assert limitation whenever we speak of a year, a day, or an hour. If the statement had been, "When we speak of space and time generally, we do not assert either limitation or the absence of limitation," it would have been correct. But that would have been another proposition.

Once more:

"Space and time are wholly incomprehensible." We are compelled to think of them as existing, and yet cannot bring them within those conditions under which existences are represented in thought."

What is the difficulty in comprehending a limited portion of space or a limited period of time? When thinking of space, as John Stuart Mill justly remarks:

"We leave to it all that belongs to it as space—its three dimensions, with their geometrical properties. . . . If an object which has these well marked posi-

tive attributes, is unthinkable because it has a negative attribute as well, the number of thinkable objects must be remarkably small.”—[Examination of Sir W. Hamilton’s Philosophy.

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#### CONSCIOUSNESS.

Nor is Mr. Spencer always exact in his definitions. Thus he says:

“Consciousness implies perpetual change and the perpetual establishment of relations between its successive phases.”—[First Prin., Sec. 19.

Here is an ambiguity in the use of the word “perpetual,” which must have been employed in the sense of “continuous” or “successive.”

In the explanations which preceded this statement, the author had said:

“Our states of consciousness occur in succession. Is this chain of states of consciousness infinite or finite? We cannot say infinite; not only because we have indirectly reached the conclusion that there was a period when it commenced, but also because all infinity is inconceivable—an infinite series included. We cannot say finite; for we have no knowledge of either of its ends. Go back in memory as far as we may, we are wholly unable to identify our first states of consciousness; the perspective of our thoughts vanishes in a dim obscurity where we can make out nothing. Similarly at the other extreme. We have no immediate knowledge of a termination to the series at a future time.”—[First Prin., Sec. 19.

Here the author says we cannot say that the chain of states of consciousness is infinite, because we have reached the conclusion that there

was a period when it commenced. This is equivalent to saying, we cannot say that the chain of states is infinite because we have reached the conclusion that it is finite. Yet in the very next sentence he says we cannot say the chain is finite, because we have no knowledge of either of its ends. But when we "reached the conclusion" that "there was a period when it commenced," did we not assert a knowledge of one of its ends?

He further says:

"Go back in memory as far as we may, we are wholly unable to identify our first states of consciousness."

But is that material? Does the existence or non-existence of any thing in our experience depend upon the memory of it? Go back in memory as far as we may, we are wholly unable to identify the moment of our birth. Therefore we were never born.

That the child has its first states of consciousness, is manifest from the origin of consciousness, as given by the author himself. He says:

"During the first stage of incipient intelligence, before the feelings produced by intercourse with the outer world have been put in order, there *are* no cognitions, strictly so called; and, as every infant shows us, these slowly emerge out of the confusion of unfolding consciousness as fast as the experiences are arranged into groups—as fast as the most frequently repeated sensations, and their relations to each other, become familiar enough to admit of their recognition as such or such, whenever they recur."—[First Prin., Sec. 24.]

Here is an admirable, scientific statement of

the origin of consciousness. At first, there is none. Then, it is gradually unfolded, like a flower. Is there any difficulty here in seeing a first state of consciousness? And because the individual, in after years, cannot remember, or is not aware of, the first state of consciousness, does that prove there was none?

Not only does Mr. Spencer show the origin of consciousness in the child, but he traces the origin of consciousness in animals.

But when Mr. Sidgwick called attention to a passage wherein Spencer, in describing "that differentiation of the physical from the psychical life" which accompanies advancing organization and advancing development of the nervous system, had said, "as nervous integration advances there must result an unbroken series of the changes" constituting psychical life—"there must arise a consciousness," Mr. Spencer says: "Now, I admit, that here is an apparent inconsistency. I ought to have said that there must result an unbroken series of these changes, which, taking place in the nervous system of a highly organized creature, gives coherence to its conduct, and along with which we assume consciousness, because consciousness goes along with coherent conduct in ourselves." Seeing that the tracing of the origin of consciousness thus distinctly would not consist with the doctrine of the Unknowable, which he had based upon a dim or vague consciousness—for, if the doctrine is placed upon this basis, animals also

should have a consciousness of the Unknowable—he here, for the first time, implies doubt or uncertainty as to the existence of consciousness in animals.

But the existence of consciousness in animals cannot be ignored by Mr. Spencer, who says (*Psychology*, p. 572), that the common notion that there is a line of demarcation between reason and instinct has no foundation whatever in fact; and (*ibid.* p. 573) that there is a series of insensible steps by which brute rationality may pass into human rationality.

Nor is animal consciousness habitually ignored by Mr. Spencer. Thus, in his criticism of Bain on the Emotions and the Will, he speaks several times of the consciousness of birds.—[*Essays*, Vol. I, p. 256.]

So, also, in his discussion with Mr. Martineau, he speaks of the newly hatched chicken as having “feeling, and therefore consciousness.” [*Ib.* p. 378.]

To come back to the subject of states of consciousness. Mr. Spencer says we cannot say that the chain of states of consciousness is infinite and we cannot say that it is finite. But if there be any such chain, it must be either finite or infinite in duration. Hence this is equivalent to asserting that we cannot say that there is any chain of consciousness at all.

Again, he says we cannot say that the chain of states (of consciousness) is finite, because we do not know the other end of the chain.

"We have no immediate knowledge of a termination to the series at a future time."

Neither have we any immediate knowledge of any future state of consciousness. And if the fact that we do not know in advance the last state of consciousness, proves that there is to be no last state of consciousness; then the fact that we do not know in advance any future state of consciousness, proves that there is to be no future state of consciousness.

The author follows up these statements with a formal argument to prove that there can be no last state of consciousness. Thus:

"If ceaseless change of state is the condition on which alone consciousness exists, then when the supposed last state has been reached by the completion of the preceding change, change has ceased; therefore consciousness has ceased; therefore the supposed last state is not a state of consciousness at all; therefore there can be no last state of consciousness."—[First Prin., Sec. 19.]

Whatever apparent validity there may be in this very abstruse argument, is owing to the use of the term "ceaseless." Strike that out, and substitute "successive," and the whole argument falls to the ground. The changes in the states of consciousness will continue to be successive so long as consciousness lasts; which is all that can be expected. When the nervous system on which consciousness depends for its existence, gives way, then consciousness ceases.

In his "Principles of Biology," Vol. I. Sec. 1, Mr. Spencer speaks of nervous disturbances which are communicated to the chief nervous centre, and "there constitute consciousness." These disturbances are caused by the changes in the relations of phenomena, which produce sensations of touch and pressure, of heat and cold, etc.

Does not the consciousness thus produced cease when the nervous system is destroyed? Is it claimed that there is, in the Spencerian philosophy, any form of consciousness that does not depend upon the nervous system? If not, then what is the difficulty in arriving at the last state of consciousness?

What validity can there be in an argument framed for the purpose of disproving a fact which is not only attested by the experience of all mankind, but which necessarily results from the author's own philosophy?

When a person has arrived at the last stage of his conscious existence, then is his last state of consciousness. Though he may not know that it is the last, yet it nevertheless is, in fact, his last state of consciousness. No fine-spun, metaphysically constructed argument can overthrow this plain fact, the truth of which is known to all the world. We should hesitate to believe that this ingenious argument had been made in aid of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. That doctrine ought to be permitted to stand or fall on its own merits,

without the adventitious assistance of reasoning which seems strangely out of place when we consider the system of philosophy in which it appears.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE UNKNOWABLE.—FIRST CAUSE.

We cannot rightly affirm the existence of any thing unless we know that it exists. And we must know not only that it exists, but that it exists in relation, since we know nothing except as it exists in relation. But if it exists in relation, then it is knowable. To say of any thing, therefore, that it exists, is to say that it is knowable; and to say that it is unknowable is to say that we cannot affirm that it exists.

Again:

The Unknowable is also unthinkable. It is trebly unthinkable.—[First Principles, Sec. 24.

The fact that any other hypothesis is unthinkable—cannot be formulated in thought—is, in the mind of Mr. Spencer, a fatal objection. The Atheistic theory of the origin of the universe is rejected for that reason. The Theistic theory is rejected for the same reason. Pantheism, for the same reason. “It is not,” he says, “a question of probability or credibility, but of conceivability.”—[First Prin., Sec. 11.

"Each of these theories is equally vicious, equally unthinkable."—[Ibid.

In the first volume of the "Principles of Biology," Sec. 171, speaking of the Evolution hypothesis, as opposed to the hypothesis of the special creation of living beings; the author says of the latter, "It is not even a thinkable hypothesis;" and speaks of it as being, for that reason, "illusive." Of the former, on the contrary, he says:

"Instead of being a mere pseud-idea, we saw that it admitted of elaboration into a definite conception—so showing its legitimacy as a hypothesis."

In Section 118, also, of that work, writing on the same subject, he says of the special creation hypothesis, that it is illusive because of the impossibility of realizing it in thought.

Yet the doctrine of the Unknowable, which is confessedly open to the same objection, he not only considers a legitimate hypothesis, but asks us to accept as "the most certain of all truths."

#### FIRST CAUSE.

The Unknowable is posited as First Cause. It is said that persistence of force is the highest generalization of science; and that known force, or "force as known to us," which persists, is but the symbol or correlative of an unknown force, which unknown force is posited as First Cause of all phenomena.

1. What is meant by persistence of force as the highest generalization of science?

Force is not an entity. Force is an attribute.

Persistence of force is the persistence with which matter, whether at rest or in motion, manifests certain degrees of force under certain conditions, and the persistence with which force, though disappearing under certain conditions, reappears, or is again manifested, under other conditions.

In aid of the doctrine of the Unknowable, Mr. Spencer considers force an entity. At times, again, he looks upon it as an open question whether force is an entity or not. For instance, he says:

"Leaving undiscussed the question whether it is possible to conceive of force apart from extending something exercising it," etc.—[Essays, Vol. II, p. 98.]

But it is not possible to conceive of force apart from extending something exercising it; for the simple reason that whenever force appears, it appears as having been exercised by an extended something.

"The idea of resistance," says Mr. Spencer, "cannot be separated in thought from the idea of an extended body which offers resistance."—[First Prin., 1897, Sec. 16, p. 55.]

Now, if resistance, being a manifestation of force, cannot be separated in thought from the idea of an extended body which offers resistance, then it is at least a fair inference, that no manifestation of force can be separated in thought from the idea of an extended body which manifests such force.

Accordingly we find Mr. Spencer announcing substantially this very proposition. Speaking of force, he says:

"We cannot imagine it except through the instrumentality of something having extension." —[First Prin., 2d Edition, Sec. 18, p. 60.]

Is force here treated as an entity, or as an attribute?

2. The next question is, how do we arrive at the truth of the proposition that persistence of force is the highest generalization of science?

The process is the familiar one of abstraction and generalization.

Accompanying the process, there are two other cognate processes: inductive and deductive reasoning. We make investigations of the phenomena of the external world, and by induction arrive at conclusions concerning the attributes which can properly be predicated of objects.

The process of deductive reasoning has been going on, also, at the same time—reasoning of which, as is well known, abstraction and generalization are at the very foundation.

Mark, now, that all the time, in the progress of this threefold process, we have been dealing with attributes. We have not been following a chain of cause and effect. That is a different thing entirely. Not but that cause and effect have been from time to time considered in connection with these processes. The relation of cause and effect sometimes coincides with that of premise and conclusion. An occasional coin-

cidence does not, however, change the character of the process. Writers on logic have specified the confounding of these relations as one of the most fruitful sources of confusion of thought.

Since, then, we have arrived at the persistence of force by a process which has all the way been a logical one—since we have all the way been dealing in attributes, and have not been following a chain of cause and effect—how does it come that when we have arrived at the highest attribute, we can turn around and predicate that attribute as First Cause and Ultimate Being?

Force may be a cause of certain effects. So may other attributes. But force being an attribute, neither force as known to us, nor unknown force, can be First Cause, or Absolute Being. If force as known to us is an attribute, then unknown force is an unknown attribute, and cannot therefore be First Cause and Absolute Being.

In his Essay on the “Nature of Electricity,” Mr. Spencer says:

“It cannot be that what in the first case produces a change of *state*, in the second case produces an *entity*.”

So here we may say, it cannot be that what in all the previous stages of this process has been an attribute, becomes in the last stage an entity.

In science, a cause is at the same time the effect of another cause, or other causes. But here we have posited for us a cause which is not the effect of any other cause. It is said to be out of relation. But a cause cannot be out of relation.

The effect is admitted to be related to its

cause, but it is claimed that the cause is not related to its effect. We have a relative, but no correlative—relation without correlation.

If Mr. Spencer has a right to posit an Unknowable as the cause of phenomena, why has not another person, A, the same right to posit a second Unknowable behind the first; and B, a third behind the second; and so on? An endless chain of Unknownables would be much more reasonable than a single Unknowable; because such a chain would have an analogy in the chain of causation known to science.

Mr. Spencer, in combating the theory of the self-creation of the universe, shows that such a theory would require two existences, one behind the other; which is exactly what the doctrine of the Unknowable requires. Assuming that such a hypothesis, besides being inconceivable, upon which he lays great stress, would imply, behind actual existence, potential existence passing into actual existence, he reasons thus:

"Moreover, even if it were true that potential existence is conceivable as a different thing from actual existence, and that the transition from the one to the other can be mentally realized as a self-determined change, we should still be no forwarder: the problem would simply be removed a step back. For whence the potential existence? This would just as much require accounting for as actual existence; and just the same difficulties would meet us. Respecting the origin of such a latent power, no other suppositions could be made than those above named—self-existence, self-creation, creation by external agency. The self-existence of a potential universe is no more conceivable than we

have found the self-existence of the actual universe to be. The self-creation of such a potential universe would involve over again the difficulties here stated—would imply behind this potential universe a more remote potentiality; and so on, in an infinite series, leaving us at last no forwarder than at first. While to assign as the source of this potential universe an external agency, would be to introduce the notion of a potential universe for no purpose whatever.”—[First Principles, Sec. 11.

Now, let us paraphrase this passage by substituting for “potential existence” “the Unknowable;” and we have the following:

Moreover, even if it were true that the Unknowable is conceivable as a different thing from actual existence, and that the transition from the one to the other can be mentally realized as a self-determined change, we should still be no forwarder: the problem would simply be removed a step back. For whence the Unknowable? This would just as much require accounting for as actual existence; and just the same difficulties would meet us. Respecting the origin of such a latent power, no other suppositions could be made than those above named—self-existence, self-creation, creation by external agency. The self-existence of an Unknowable is no more conceivable than we have found the self-existence of the actual universe to be. The self-creation of such an Unknowable would involve over again the difficulties here stated—would imply behind this Unknowable a more remote Unknowable; and so on, in an infinite series, leaving us at last no forwarder than at first. While to assign as the source of the Unknowable an external agency, would be to introduce the notion of an Unknowable for no purpose whatever.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE UNKNOWABLE CONTINUED—CREATION—ATHEISM—AGNOSTICISM.

Creation, according to the theological sense of the term, has generally been understood to imply creation of the world out of nothing. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

The Miltonian conception of creation from chaos is not inconsistent with the theory of evolution.

Malebranche held that all phenomena are presented to the mind by continued and successive creations from instant to instant.

“La conservation des créatures est une création continuée.”

These are the three theories of creation; and it is difficult to conceive any other theory.

The first and third are repudiated by Mr. Spencer. Speaking of the theory of creation at the beginning, he says:

“The production of matter out of nothing is the real mystery. . . . .

"Even supposing that the genesis of the universe could really be represented in thought as the result of an external agency; the mystery would be as great as ever; for there would still arise the question—how came there to be an external agency? To account for this, only the same three hypotheses are possible—self-existence, self-creation, and creation by external agency. Of these, the last is useless; it commits us to an infinite series of such agencies, and even then leaves us where we were. . . . Those who cannot conceive a self-existent universe, and who therefore assume a creator as the source of the universe, take for granted that they can conceive a self-existent creator. The mystery which they recognize in this great fact surrounding them on every side, they transfer to an alleged source of the great fact; and then suppose that they have solved the mystery. But they delude themselves. As was proved at the outset of the argument, self-existence is rigorously inconceivable; and this holds true, whatever be the nature of the object of which it is predicated. Whoever agrees that the atheistic hypothesis is untenable because it involves the impossible idea of self-existence, must perforce admit that the theistic hypothesis is untenable if it contains the same impossible idea."—[First Prin., Sec. 11.]

The Unknowable is posited not only as First Cause, but as "The Creating Power." In what sense is the Unknowable the Creating Power? Which mode of creation will be adopted for the Unknowable? Will it be claimed that the universe was created by the Unknowable as an external agency? If so, by a slight paraphrase, we have from Mr. Spencer himself the following argument:

Even supposing that the genesis of the universe could really be represented in thought as the result of

an Unknowable; the mystery would be as great as ever; for there would still arise the question—how came there to be an Unknowable? To account for this, only the same three hypotheses are possible—self-existence, self-creation, and creation by another Unknowable. Of these, the last is useless; it commits us to an infinite series of such Unknownables; and even then leaves us where we were. . . . Those who cannot conceive a self-existent universe, and who therefore assume an unknowable Creating Power as the source of the universe, take for granted that they can conceive a self-existent, unknowable Creating Power. The mystery which they recognize in this great fact surrounding them on every side, they transfer to an alleged source of the great fact—to an unknowable and unthinkable Creating Power. They then suppose that they have solved the mystery. But they delude themselves. As was proved at the outset of the argument, self-existence is rigorously inconceivable; and this holds true, whatever be the nature of the object of which it is predicated—whether it be called the Creator, First Cause, the Unknowable, or the Creating Power. Whoever agrees that the atheistic hypothesis is untenable because it involves the impossible idea of self-existence, must perforce admit that the hypothesis of the Unknowable is untenable if it contains the same impossible idea.

We may therefore discard the idea of the creation of the universe by the Unknowable as an external agency. How then can the Unknowable be the Creating Power? Shall we adopt the theory of Malebranche, and say the Unknowable projects phenomena into the universe by continuous creation? But this theory also is rejected by the author of "First Principles."

We are, then, forced to the conclusion that it

is in the creation by evolution that the Unknowable is considered the Creating Power. But evolution is a process of unfolding in accordance with the primordial laws of matter and motion. Since these laws are stable and uniform in their operation, what office is there for the Unknowable to perform in the work of creation? Is it to see that the laws are kept in operation? This might be inferred from the fact that one of the titles of the Unknowable is, "The Sustaining Power." But since no intelligence is ascribed to the Unknowable, how is it to know whether the laws are properly carried out or not? And if it should know or should find out that something was going wrong, how could the wrong be righted, since no activity is ascribed to the Unknowable? It is difficult to see what would be its function in the process of creation by evolution.

There is, therefore, no possible sense in which the Unknowable can be the Creating or Sustaining Power. And how came the Unknowable into existence? It is called the First Cause—the Ultimate Cause. But the Ultimate Cause must be uncaused; and if uncaused, it must be self-existent. Mr. Spencer says, "self-existence is rigorously inconceivable." How then can he assume an Unknowable as the Creating Power of the universe? Are not a Creating Power and a Creator the same thing? How can he object to the doctrine of creation by a Creator, on the ground that the Creator would



be self-existent, and therefore inconceivable, and at the same time maintain the existence of a Creating Power which must be equally self-existent and equally inconceivable? Why has not the Theist as much right to have an inconceivable Creator as the author of First Principles has to have an inconceivable Creating Power?

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#### ATHEISM.

The existence of a God is inconceivable, and the necessity of such an existence in a universe governed by law, is inconceivable. But it is equally inconceivable how the universe could have existed from all eternity, and could now be drifting through the ages without any sustaining power or controlling mind, and without any definite purpose as to the final outcome.

John Stuart Mill has shown that truth does not rest on the foundation that the contrary is inconceivable. If a proposition is not only inconceivable but at the same time contradictory or absurd, then it is to be rejected; but not merely because it is inconceivable.

If that were so, then, as has been shown by Dr. Brownson—whose criticism of Spencer is in some respects the most searching and cogent of all—it can easily be proved that there is no existing cosmos. The argument will run thus:

What is inconceivable is not true.

It is inconceivable that there should be a created cosmos; and it is inconceivable that there should be a cosmos existing from all eternity.

But if there be a cosmos, it either was created or is self-existent.

Therefore, it is not true that there is any existing cosmos whatever.

The converse argument will run as follows:

It is true that there is an existing cosmos.

It is inconceivable that this cosmos should have been created, or should have existed forever.

But one or the other is true.

Therefore, something is true that is inconceivable.

The corollary to this is the proposition of Mr. Mill, that merely because any thing is inconceivable, we cannot therefore say that it is false; and the further proposition that we cannot say that any thing is necessarily true, the contrary of which is inconceivable.

To affirm that God does not exist, and to say that we cannot affirm that God exists, are two very different propositions. And the difference between them is the difference between Atheism and Agnosticism.

In discussing the relative merits of Atheism and Agnosticism, we must define certain terms, to wit: GOD, THEISM, ATHEISM, AGNOSTICISM. By the term God I mean a supreme intelligent Being, as the definition is given in Webster. By the term Theism is meant a belief in the existence of a supreme intelligent Being; and by the term Atheism, a disbelief or denial of the existence of such a Being.

But it is claimed that the word Atheist being derived from the Greek Theos, meaning God,

and *A*, the Greek Alpha, which is privative, Atheism simply means without Theism, or without any belief in God, and does not necessarily imply denial of his existence. This is not entirely correct. It is true that Alpha is privative, but the term privative does not mean merely without. It implies not only privation, but negation, and gives a negative force to a word.

The office which Alpha performs can best be illustrated by some examples:

The Greek *boulomai* means to will, to wish, to be willing. *A-bouleo* means to be unwilling. The force of *a-bouleo* would not be maintained if a person simply had no will upon the subject. He must be positively unwilling. It is equivalent to *ou* (not) and *boulomai*. "*A-bouleo = ou boulomai.*"--[Liddell & Scott.]

The Greek *glukus* means sweet. *A-glukees* means not sweet, sour, harsh. It would not be sufficient that a thing should be *without* sweetness.

*Diallasso* means to reconcile. *A-diallaktos*, irreconcilable. That a person is not reconciled to his enemy, or is *without* being reconciled, is not sufficient. He must refuse to be reconciled.

*Seobo*, to worship, to be religious; *a-sebees*, ungodly, unholy, profane.

In the following instance, *alpha* is merely privative: *Dikazo*, to judge. *A-dikastos*, without judgment given, undecided.

It depends upon the nature of the attribute qualified or of the act performed. If in this case the Greek verb had meant to judge favorably, then the prefix would have indicated adverse judgment.

Thus it will be seen that the etymological signification of the word Atheism is not far different from its popular signification.

## AGNOSTICISM.

By the term Agnosticism is meant the position of one who denies that he has any knowledge concerning the existence of a God, or any evidence sufficient for a faith in such a Being. But he does not deny the existence of such a Being. He falls back upon his ignorance. The subject may be illustrated by the following catechism:

## QUESTION.

Is there a God?

## ANSWER.

*By the Atheist and Agnostic in unison.*—What do you mean by a God?

## QUESTION.

By a God I mean a supreme intelligent Being. Is there such a Being?

## ANSWER.

*By the Atheist.*—No.

*By the Agnostic.*—I do not know.

The Agnostic and the Comtist are at one so far as the existence of God is concerned. Neither of them affirms or denies anything upon the subject. Neither the Agnostic nor the Comtist philosophy is atheistic. Neither of these philosophies goes behind phenomena—neither of them searches for a first cause. The Spencerian metaphysical philosophy goes behind phenomena—it searches for a first cause, and finds it in something which it calls the Unknowable; but it is not God. It looks where God should be, but finds him not. Nowhere in phenomena, nor in the incomprehensible, or at least the uncomprehended, mysteries of matter, nor yet in the immeasurable beyond, does it find a place for God.

Neither the Agnostic nor the Comtist claims to know of the existence of any thing behind the phenomena of the universe. The Spencerian metaphysical philosopher affirms that he knows of the existence of something behind phenomena. While he does not affirm categorically that it is not God, yet this existence, having neither attributes nor intelligence, cannot be God. The Spencerian metaphysical philosopher does, therefore, in effect, deny the existence of God; since he substitutes for him another existence, which leaves no place for God in the universe.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### DOCTRINE OF THE UNKNOWABLE—DIM OR VAGUE CONSCIOUSNESS.

The existence of the Unknowable is posited from a dim or vague consciousness; from an incomplete thought. It is admitted that the Unknowable cannot be distinctly formulated in thought; that when the consciousness becomes vivid, the Unknowable disappears. But it is claimed that from a faint or dim consciousness—from half-formed thoughts—we may posit that which is the most certain of all truths. This is equivalent to asserting that when we are in a dreamy state—when we are in a reverie—we are in the best possible condition for the ascertainment of truth. Let us see how this condition of mind is described:

“Manifestations that occur under the conditions called those of perception . . . are ordinarily far more distinct than those which occur under the conditions known as those of reflection, or memory, or imagination, or ideation. These vivid manifestations do, indeed, sometimes differ but little from the faint

ones. When nearly dark, we may be unable to decide whether a certain manifestation belongs to the vivid order or the faint order—whether, as we say, we really see something, or fancy we see it. . . .

“During what we call our states of activity, the vivid manifestations predominate. It is only on lapsing into the unconsciousness termed sleep, that manifestations of the vivid order cease to be distinguishable as such, and those of the faint order come to be mistaken for them. . . .

“When, as we say, absorbed in thought, the disturbance of the faint current is but superficial. . . . There meanwhile flows on a main stream of faint manifestations wholly unrelated to the vivid manifestations—what we call a reverie, perhaps, or it may be a process of reasoning. And occasionally, during the state known as absence of mind, this current of faint manifestations so far predominates that the vivid current scarcely affects it at all. . . . Manifestations of the one order are vivid, and those of the other are faint. Those of the one order are originals, while those of the other order are copies.”—[First Prin., Sec. 43.]

We fail to see in this any thing that gives a peculiar value to the faint manifestations. On the contrary, it shows that a faint consciousness is such as we have when in a reverie, or in a dreamy condition.

Let us now turn to Sec. 26 of First Principles, where the subject is examined more closely, with reference to the Unknowable:

“Besides that *definite* consciousness of which logic formulates the laws, there is also an *indefinite* consciousness which cannot be formulated. Besides complete thoughts, and besides the thoughts which though incomplete admit of completion, there are thoughts which it is impossible to complete, and yet which are

still real in the sense that they are normal affections of the intellect. . . .

"It is rigorously impossible to conceive that our knowledge is a knowledge of appearances only, without at the same time conceiving a Reality of which they are appearances; for appearance without reality is unthinkable. Strike out from the argument the terms Unconditioned, Infinite, Absolute, with their equivalents, and in place of them write 'negation of conceivability,' or 'absence of the conditions under which consciousness is possible,' and you find that the argument becomes nonsense. Truly to realize in thought any one of the propositions of which the argument consists, the Unconditioned must be represented as positive and not negative. [This in reply to Sir William Hamilton, who says that the notion of the unconditioned is only negative; and in reply to Mr. Mansel, who says that the infinite must be regarded as the mere negation of thought.] How, then, can it be a legitimate conclusion from the argument that our consciousness of it is negative? An argument, the very construction of which assigns to a certain term a certain meaning, but which ends in showing that this term has no such meaning, is simply an elaborate suicide. Clearly, then, the very demonstration that a *definite* consciousness of the Absolute is impossible to us, unavoidably presupposes an *indefinite* consciousness of it."

Clearly, the difference here is owing mainly to a different use of terms. Mr. Mansel and Sir William Hamilton explain that by the terms absolute and unconditioned they mean merely the negation of the knowable. But when Mr. Spencer uses these terms, he means the positive existence of the Unknowable; and, insisting upon the terms being taken in the sense in which he

uses them, and urging that the argument made on the other side requires the same meaning to be given to them, he claims that there is an inconsistency.

It will be noticed that he lays much stress upon the fact that it is necessary that the Unconditioned be represented as positive in order "to realize in thought any one of the propositions of which the argument consists."

In determining whether there be an Unknowable or not, Mr. Spencer rigorously insists that the propositions of which the argument consists shall be realized in thought. But that the Unknowable itself should be realized in thought, he considers of no consequence.

Again: We fail to see how the distinction between definite and indefinite consciousness has any thing to do with this argument. If the argument is good, it is because the very terms made use of imply the positive existence of the Unconditioned. Does Mr. Spencer mean to fall back upon an indefinite consciousness to make good an argument which would otherwise be invalid or uncertain? If his conclusion follows from the premises, he does not need an indefinite consciousness to sustain the argument. If it does not follow, how can the indefinite consciousness make it good? Surely he cannot mean to appeal for evidence of the Unknowable to the indefinite consciousness of Hamilton and Mansel, neither of whom concedes any consciousness of such an existence.

Further along in the same section, he comes still more closely to the question:

"And here we come face to face with the ultimate difficulty:—How can there possibly be constituted a consciousness of the unformed and unlimited, when, by its very nature, consciousness is possible only under forms and limits? If every consciousness of existence is a consciousness of existence as conditioned, then how, after the negation of conditions, can there be any residuum? . . . In each concept there is an element which persists. . . . The persistence of this element, under successive conditions, *necessitates* a sense of it as distinguished from the conditions, and independent of them. The sense of a something that is conditioned in every thought, cannot be got rid of because the something cannot be got rid of. How, then, must the sense of this something be constituted? Evidently *by combining successive concepts deprived of their limits and conditions.*"

We have emphasized the last sentence, because it contains a complete statement of the doctrine of the Unknowable. The question is thus very fairly stated:

"How can there possibly be constituted a consciousness of the unformed and unlimited, when, by its very nature, consciousness is possible only under forms and limits?"

The answer is:

**"By combining successive concepts deprived of their limits and conditions."**

Now, if this can be done, then, we admit, the doctrine of the Unknowable can be established. To say that we can do this, is to say that concepts which are possible only under form and

condition, can be deprived of their forms and conditions, and then combined together.

We can think only in relation. Take away the relations existing in thought, and you take away the thought. Neither a dim nor a vivid consciousness will remain.

Not only are these "limits and conditions" necessary to thought, but in consciousness they are necessary to the continuance of thought. Unless these concepts, after being formed, can be continued in successive existence, they cannot be "combined," even if they could be deprived of their limits and conditions.

The continued concepts, those denominated by our author faint manifestations, are, he assures us, copies of the vivid manifestations. But copies cannot be more potent than the originals; therefore both classes of manifestations, the vivid and the faint, are equally dependent on form and condition for their existence.

This view of the matter is confirmed by Prof. Bain. He says:

"The really fundamental separation of the powers of the Intellect is into three facts called (1) *Discrimination*, the Sense, Feeling, or Consciousness of Difference; (2) *Similarity*, the Sense, Feeling, or Consciousness of Agreement; [these two divisions correspond to the 'vivid consciousness' of Spencer;] and (3) *Retentiveness*, or the power of Memory or Acquisition." (This last division corresponds to the "faint consciousness" of Spencer.)—["Mind and Body," N. Y., 1894, pp. 82, 83.]

Speaking of Retention, Acquisition, or Memory, which he defines as "the power of continu-

ing in the mind impressions that are no longer stimulated by the original agent," Prof. Bain says:

"It must be considered as almost beyond a doubt that [apparently quoting from the elder Scaliger] '*the renewed feeling occupies the very same parts and in the same manner as the original feeling*, and no other parts nor in any other manner that can be assigned.'" —[Ibid., p. 89.]

The copies must have the same limits and conditions as the originals. How, then, can successive concepts be "deprived of their limits and conditions"? To deprive a thought of its limits and conditions is to strike it out of existence.

Inasmuch, then, as the vivid and faint manifestations stand upon the same foundation, and the faint are copies of the vivid, which are the more to be relied upon?

We have the authority of Mr. Spencer himself for saying that the faint manifestations are not so reliable as the vivid. Writing upon the same subject in another place, he says:

"Deliverances of consciousness given in the vivid terms we call sensations, excite a confidence immeasurably exceeding the confidence excited by the deliverances given in the faint terms we distinguish as ideas."

After giving illustrations, he concludes as follows:

"By all persons, then, and in all cases, where the characters of the acts of consciousness are in other respects the same, the deliverances given in vivid terms are accepted in preference to those given in faint

terms. Obscure perceptions are rejected rather than clear ones; remembrances which are definite are trusted rather than those which are indefinite; and above all, the deliverances of consciousness composed of sensations are unhesitatingly preferred to those composed of the ideas of sensations."—[Psychology, Sec. 410.

And speaking of a certain theory, he says:

"It could not be accepted without asserting that things are most certainly known in proportion as they are most faintly perceived."

And yet, notwithstanding this distinct verdict in favor of the vivid manifestations when compared with the faint manifestations, we are asked to accept the Unknowable "as the most certain of all truths," when posited from a dim, vague, indefinite consciousness; while it is admitted that before a vivid consciousness—before a complete thought—the Unknowable disappears.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### DOCTRINE OF THE UNKNOWABLE—ANTITHESIS OF THOUGHT.

It is claimed that we are under the necessity of predicating the positive existence of the Unknowable as the antithesis of thought.

What is an antithesis? It is something “set over” against something else.

All thought is in relation. What is the nature of this relation? It is the relation of objects to ourselves and to each other; not their relation to something existing in some other mode than that in which these objects exist. If such were the relation that enables the individual to cognize the external world, then the argument for the unknowable might be good. But it is the relation of things with each other that renders them cognizable. Phenomena cannot be related to the Unknowable, because, by the hypothesis, the Unknowable is out of relation. One of its many names is the Non-Relative. How can any thing be in relation to that which is entirely out of relation?

The Unknowable is said to be "behind" phenomena. If behind, then it is outside. And how can the relations between objects throw any light upon any thing outside of the objects themselves? No relation can prove the existence of any object outside the terms of the relation. The relation of A to B cannot prove the existence of C. But it proves the existence of A and B, else they could not be in relation. Let A and B be two objects in the external world; and let C be the Absolute or Unknowable. The relation is between A and B: not between A and B on the one side and C on the other.

When I look at a chair in the room in which I am sitting, what is it that enables me to cognize the chair? Is it not the relation between the chair and the other objects in the room? as also the relation between the chair and the room, and between the chair and room on the one side and myself on the other? Or is it the relation between all these and some unknown power which may be supposed to have brought them into existence? As well might it be said that what enables me to cognize the chair is the relation between the chair and the cabinet-maker who manufactured it, or between the chair and the tradesman who sold it. Manifestly it is neither the one nor the other. Much less is it a relation existing between the chair and something behind the chair, the cabinet-maker, and the tradesman.

What enables us to cognize phenomena is not

a relation supposed to exist between the phenomena and the noumena, but the relations perceived to exist between the phenomena themselves.

The relation that renders cognition possible, is the relation between things knowable; not between the knowable and the unknowable. Things in themselves knowable become, through their relation to each other, subjects of cognition. After that, the boundaries of knowledge are extended by proceeding, not from the knowable to the unknowable, but from the known to the unknown. As Voltaire says: "On va d'ordinaire du connu à l'inconnu."

Let it be borne in mind that there is no analogy between the antithesis claimed for the Unknowable, and that insisted upon by James Martineau (*Essays*, Vol. 3, p. 204), in regard to infinite space and time. His argument, that you cannot say that you know the moon to be different from the sun, and at the same time say you do not know it to be different from the infinite space in which it moves; and that you cannot say you know Caesar's life and date to be other than Seneca's, and at the same time say you do not know either from the infinite time in which it appears—is a good argument. Here there is an antithesis. By contrast and correlation, we can form some idea—an indefinite idea it is true—but some idea of infinite time and space; as John Stuart Mill justly maintains. But of the Unknowable we can form no idea whatever, be-

cause here there is no antithesis of thought.

If the Unknowable furnishes an antithesis for thought, how is it that it is said to be not only unknowable but unthinkable? If any thing is an antithesis of thought, can it at the same time be outside the boundaries of thought? If a thought be in antithesis, can either term of the antithesis be outside the thought?

It is not correct to say (as in "First Principles," Sec. 26) that "the Noumenon is every where named as the antithesis of the Phenomenon." It is not so named by Mr. Mansel, nor by Sir William Hamilton. It is not so named by Auguste Comte, nor by many others.

Again, it is asserted that "appearance without reality is unthinkable." But the reality, according to Mr. Spencer himself, is equally unthinkable. The argument therefore is, that in order to think of something that is thinkable, it is necessary to think of something that is not thinkable. In order to understand anything of what is knowable, it is necessary to predicate the positive existence of something unknowable. In order to think in relation, it is necessary to think out of relation. But to think out of relation is impossible. Therefore, in order to think, it is necessary not to think.

What is reality? It is this objective world in which we live, move, and have our being. It is this which is the basis of all science—the source of all positive knowledge. It is the only reality which we know or can know.

Further, our author says:

"It is a doctrine called in question by none, that such antinomies of thought as whole and part, equal and unequal, singular and plural, are necessarily conceived as correlatives; the conception of a part is impossible without the conception of a whole; there can be no idea of equality without one of inequality. And it is admitted [?] that in the same manner the Relative is itself conceivable as such only by opposition to the Irrelative or Absolute."—[First Prin., Sec. 26.]

The answer to this may be given in the language of Sir William Hamilton:

One of these correlatives is nothing beyond the negation of the other.

"Correlatives," he says, "certainly suggest each other; but correlatives may or may not be equally real and positive. In thought, contradictionaries necessarily imply each other; for the knowledge of contradictionaries is one. But the reality of one contradictory, so far from guaranteeing the reality of the other, is nothing else than its negation. Thus every positive notion (the concept of a thing by what it is) suggests a negative notion (the concept of a thing by what it is not); and the highest positive notion, the notion of the conceivable, is not without its corresponding negative in the notion of the inconceivable. But though these mutually suggest each other, the positive alone is real; the negative is only an abstraction of the other, and in the highest generality even an abstraction of thought itself."—[Hamilton's Criticism of Cousin.]

Mr. Spencer replies to this by reaffirming his former position, and adds:

"If the Non-Relative or Absolute is present in thought only as a mere negation, then the relation between it and the Relative becomes unthinkable, because one of the terms of the relation is absent from

consciousness. And if this relation is unthinkable, then is the relative itself unthinkable for want of its antithesis; whence results the disappearance of all thought whatever."

Here we cannot refrain from again making a slight paraphrase; and we will have the argument running thus:

"If the Non-Relative or Absolute is present in thought as a Reality, then, this Reality being unthinkable, any relation between it and the Relative becomes unthinkable; because one of the terms of the relation is absent from consciousness. And if this relation is unthinkable, then is the relative itself unthinkable; whence results the disappearance of all thought whatever."

What is the verdict of consciousness on this question? Does consciousness say that in order to think of something that can be thought of, it is necessary to think of something that cannot be thought of? Does consciousness tell us that in order to think in relation it is necessary to think out of relation? Does it tell us that in order to cognize something that exists, we must recognize as existing something which we do not know to exist?

Mr. Spencer repeatedly speaks of depriving thought of its limits and conditions for the purpose of establishing a consciousness of the Unknowable. But he overlooks the fact that he had already claimed that the existence of the Unknowable is a necessary condition of thought.

If the Unknowable is a necessary condition of

thought, then, in depriving thought of its limits and conditions, he eliminates the Unknowable, which was the most essential condition. If the Unknowable was a necessary condition of thought, why not let it remain? What the necessity for depriving thought of that or any other condition for the purpose of establishing the existence of that which had already been predicated as necessary? Why not let thought remain, with its necessary limits and conditions? What the necessity for this abstruse metaphysical process? Why take thought to pieces merely for the purpose of reconstructing it?

First, thought is to be deprived of its limits and conditions; and then, successive concepts, consisting of unconditioned thought—which is really no thought at all—are to be combined together in order to form a consciousness of the Unknowable. And thus thought is to get back the condition of which it has been deprived;—a condition which, according to the author of “First Frinciples,” was in the first place, and all the time has been, necessary to its existence.

Mr. Spencer replies to Hamilton that while he (Hamilton) does not admit the existence of the Unknowable as an antithesis of thought, he does admit the same existence on the authority of divine revelation. This is the “argumentum ad hominem”; and while it may be good *as* against Hamilton, it is not good against one who does not accept the revelation, and who denies that he has any dim or vague consciousness of

the Unknowable. What answer will be made to such a one? Will he be contradicted, and told that he has borne false testimony against his consciousness? Or will he be told that he does not know what his consciousness testifies? Mr. Spencer himself says that no one knows what is in the consciousness of a person except that person himself. How, then, can he say what is in the consciousness of others?

The fact that Auguste Comte and Sir William Hamilton and Mr. Mansel deny that they have any consciousness of the positive existence of the Unknowable as the antithesis of thought, is of itself sufficient to entirely overthrow this branch of the argument in favor of the Unknowable, as existing in universal consciousness.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### DOCTRINE OF THE UNKNOWABLE—IDEALISM.

"We are thus forced to the conclusion that the relations of co-existence, of sequence, and of difference, as we know them, do not obtain beyond consciousness."—[Principles of Psychology, Vol I, Chap. IV., Sec. 93.

This proposition is not only, as the author says, "apparently incredible"; it is really incredible. It is incredible because it is contrary to the universal experience of mankind.

The proposition is, that the relations of co-existence, etc., as we know them, do not obtain beyond consciousness.

Let us suppose that "we" consist of four persons: A, B, C, and D. Our consciousness is not in common. Each has his own consciousness, and the consciousness of each is beyond that of each of the others. The question is, whether the relations of co-existence, of sequence, and of difference, as we, the four, know them, obtain beyond consciousness.

These relations, though they may be at times somewhat different, are, as we find by compari-

son, substantially the same in the consciousness of the four. Now, the very fact that the relations obtain in the consciousness of A, proves that they obtain beyond the consciousness of B, C, and D. And, in like manner, the very fact that they obtain in the consciousness of B, C, and D, or either of them, proves that they obtain beyond the consciousness of A.

What, then, is the cause of these subjective relations which are beyond the consciousness of each, and which, at the same time, are within the consciousness of each? We do not obtain them one from the other. They must, therefore, have corresponding relations in the external world, existing beyond consciousness. We all know that the relations obtain, not only in our own consciousness, but in the consciousness of others; and we know that there is no other explanation of this than the existence of the material world around us, in the relations of co-existence, of sequence, and of difference.

Let us bring this question of idealism to a practical test:

Suppose a person to go into a dark room, thinking it to be empty, while in fact there are several stoves in various portions of the room. He soon perceives relations of co-existence, of sequence, and of difference obtaining in the room. He not only has the persistent consciousness of those relations, but he has at the same time a painful impression that while he was on his way to the room, and before he had entered it,

those relations obtained in the room, beyond his consciousness. When he strikes against one of these stoves, whose ideas or whose subjective affections or relations or states of consciousness does he hit against? Surely, not his own; for he did not know the stoves were there. If these relations obtained beyond his consciousness when he did not know of their existence, do they not equally obtain beyond his consciousness, now that he does know of their existence? Or do relations which previously obtained beyond his consciousness now become merged into his consciousness, and thereby lose the separate existence which they previously had?

It is plain that the relations of co-existence, of sequence, and of difference, as we know them, do in fact obtain beyond consciousness.

There are other tests, also, for correcting the individual consciousness—other ways of ascertaining whether the relations *in consciousness* have corresponding relations, which are known to us, beyond consciousness.

For instance: Take some of the illustrations made use of by Mr. Spencer for the purpose of proving his concluding proposition. He says:

"The consciousness of a given relation of two positions in space must vary quantitatively with variation of bodily bulk. Clearly, a mouse, which has to run many times its own length to traverse the space which a man traverses at a stride, cannot have the same conception of this space as a man. . . . Distances which seemed great to the boy, seem moderate to the man; and buildings once thought imposing in height and mass,

dwindle into insignificance. . . . A small or moderate magnitude is under-estimated when a great magnitude has just before occupied the attention. A building that appeared large when it stood amid smaller buildings, loses much of its seeming largeness if a far larger building is erected close to it. Or, to take a better case—when the sun is seen in the midst of the sky, with none but great angular spaces between it and the horizon, it looks very much less than it does when close to the horizon, where the angular space it subtends is comparable side by side with small angular spaces. . . . Apparent size depends on distance from the eye, and apparent form changes with every change in the point of view. . . .

"We are thus driven to the conclusion that what we perceive as space-relations, cannot be, either in their natures or degrees, like those connections among external things to which they are due. They change both qualitatively and quantitatively with the structure, the size, the state, and the position of the percipient. And when we see that what is objectively considered the same connection between things, may, as a space-relation in consciousness, be single or double—when we remember that, according as we are near or far off, it may be too large to be simultaneously perceived or too small to be perceived at all—it becomes impossible to suppose any identity between this objective connection and some one of the multitudinous subjective relations answering to it."—[Prin. of Psychology, Vol I., pp. 213 to 215.]

This is a different conclusion from the one which we are examining. It will not be claimed that there is any "identity" between the objective connections and the relations in consciousness. The question is, whether the relations of co-existence, etc., as we know them, obtain be-

yond consciousness. The foregoing argument amounts to this: Our senses often deceive us—frequently we do not see things as they are; therefore, we do not see them at all. Hence, we have no certain knowledge of things which we perceive in the external world.

On the subject of knowledge, the position of Mr. Spencer is anomalous. He has no positive knowledge that what he sees, hears and feels, has any objective existence. But he knows that something which he cannot see, hear, or feel, does really exist.

The knowable he does not know; but the unknowable he knows.

Hence, ignorance consists in knowledge of what can be known, and knowledge consists only in the knowledge (ignorance) of what is entirely unknowable.

In other words:

What we know, we do not know; but what we do not know, we know.

And are we thus to pervert the English language in aid of a new system of philosophy?

There are tests by which to correct the illusions of consciousness. If a house looks larger or smaller than it is, by measurement we can find out how large it really is. This test of measurement we apply even to the sun. By mathematical calculation, based upon measurement, we come to form an adequate and true conception of the size of the sun; and thus the sun, "as we know it," obtains beyond conscious-

ness, in its relations of co-existence and of difference, among the heavenly bodies.

Again: The erroneous impression derived from one of the senses may be corrected by impressions derived from the other senses. Also the erroneous impressions of one person may be corrected by comparing them with the impressions of other individuals and with the collected experiences of mankind. So, also, they may be compared with the previous experiences of the same individual. His present impressions of an object can be co-ordinated with and corrected by his past impressions of the same object.

The idealism of Spencer is different from that of Berkeley and of Hume. While Berkeley leaves nothing existing beyond consciousness, Spencer leaves something existing; but what is it? After stating that the relations of co-existence, of sequence, and of difference, as we know them, do not obtain beyond consciousness, he proceeds to explain what there is beyond consciousness:

"More certain, then, than the relativity of relations, as we conceive them, is the existence of non-relative forms to which they refer; since proof of the first involves perpetual assumption of the last. There is some ontological order whence arises the phenomenal order we know as space; there is some ontological order whence arises the phenomenal order we know as time; and there is some ontological nexus whence arises the phenomenal relation we know as difference."

These, then, are what obtain beyond con-

sciousness: Non-relative forms, two ontological orders, and an ontological nexus. But what are non-relative forms? The very term "form" implies a relation. It is impossible to think of a form except in relation. What, then, is a non-relative form? And what is an ontological order? or an ontological nexus? The term "ontological" is not known to science.

We have been told in "First Principles," that the Unknowable exists out of relation; and one of the numerous names given to it is "The Non-relative." Non-relative forms, then, are nothing more nor less than forms of the Unknowable. And the ontological orders which give rise to the relations of co-existence and of sequence, as we know them, are orders of the Unknowable. So, also, the ontological nexus which gives rise to the relation of difference, as we know it, is a nexus of the Unknowable.

Thus there are only forms of consciousness within, and forms of the Unknowable without. But these forms of the Unknowable cannot be cognized. Mr. Spencer does not recognize a complete cognition at all; only something which "we call a cognition;" that is, "a relative cognition as distinguished from an absolute cognition."—[Essays, Vol. II, p. 241.]

The doctrine of the Unknowable, with its accompanying idealism, results, therefore, in the final analysis, in complete skepticism.

That such should be the outcome of the doctrine of the Unknowable, is not surprising. It

is a doctrine speculative and metaphysical in the highest degree. When a writer professedly enters into the region beyond phenomena; when he institutes a search for a first or ultimate cause; when he enters upon a discussion of the relations of the non-relative and the unknowable; when he undertakes to explain the inexplicable; when he asks us to contemplate the unthinkable, it is not strange that he should fail to make himself understood. Where there is nothing to be communicated, nothing but that fact can be made clear.

There remains to be examined, in the closing chapter, the reconciliation between science and religion.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### RECONCILIATION BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

As shown in the preceding chapters, Mr. Spencer does not recognize the separate existence of the external world, or cosmos. In this he is consistent. For, if there be an existing cosmos, it is either self-existent, or it was brought into being by a self-existent Creator. But self-existence Mr. Spencer holds to be “rigorously inconceivable”; and every thing that is inconceivable, except the Unknowable, he rejects. There being no self-existence, there can be no cosmos. His idealism involves the same conclusion.

The universe, then, does not exist. But something exists? Yes: what is it? Not anything known, nor even anything knowable; but something entirely unknowable.

The Unknowable, then, exists. Do we know it exists? Yes; this is “the most certain of all truths.” Though it is unknowable, inconceivable, and even unthinkable, yet we know that it

exists; it is inextricable from consciousness; it is the antithesis of thought.

What is this Unknowable? Has it intelligence? No. Has it activity? No. Has it any attributes? No. Has it any relation to the universe? No. Though it is the creating power, it has created nothing. Though it is first cause, it is not the cause of any effect. But while the Unknowable has effected nothing, the discovery of it has effected a reconciliation between Science and Religion.

Science and Religion are radically different in their character, in their province, and in their objects. This necessarily makes them different in their methods. And here is where they have been brought most into conflict. Their antagonism, therefore, has been essentially and mainly an antagonism of methods. The method of Science has been a method of investigation and deliberation. Its primary functions consist in the collection of facts, the weighing of evidence, and the drawing of conclusions. The method of Religion is just the reverse. It comes with what it claims to be the truth, and says, Receive it.

This conflict Mr. Spencer proposes to reconcile—nay, claims to have reconciled—by a doctrine. But since the antagonism is not based upon a doctrine, how can it be reconciled by a doctrine? How can a difference of method be harmonized by a doctrine? It is not an antagonism of doctrine. Science has never denied

that God could not be known in his essence, and religion has never denied that things could not be known in their essence.

The antagonism being not in doctrine but in method, the only way in which a reconciliation could be effected, would be to induce Science to believe without evidence—which would be impossible—or to induce Religion to submit its claims to investigation, and to the weighing of evidence.

It is said that the more scientific Science becomes, the more nearly it is brought to a recognition of the Omnipotent Unknowable; while the more religious Religion becomes, the more it ignores every thing but this same Unknowable Existence. By the mere announcement of this principle, it is claimed that the reconciliation has been effected.

First, is it true that the recognition of the positive existence of the Unknowable is the highest result of science? When and where has such a thing been stated by any scientist except by the author of the New Philosophy?

The scientists of the nineteenth century ignore the entities of the schoolmen—they recognize the fact that the boundaries of science lie between the known and the unknown. How much of the unknown is unknowable they do not undertake to say. Mr. Spencer himself was at one time wavering on this point. A note had been prepared by him, which read as follows:

"Instead of positively saying that the absolute is

unknowable, we must say that we cannot tell whether it is knowable or not."

And the author says that then, in 1873, the note still bore the wafers by which it had been attached to the original manuscript. Why he omitted that note, he could not then remember.  
— [Essays, Vol. II, p. 220.]

Secondly: Is it true that the recognition of the Unknowable is the highest element in religion? On the contrary, is it not true that religion presupposes the existence of an object of worship, which, though unknown and unknowable in its essence, may become known in its relations to man? Such an object of worship is supposed to have attributes which can bring it into communication with man. Has any other kind of religion ever been known in the history of the race?

All the religions of history have been anthropomorphic. Such is the religion of the Brahmins as interpreted by the incarnations. Such, also, is the Buddhist religion. The conceptions of the Islamite are anthropomorphic. The religion of the Jews was intensely anthropomorphic. The Christian religion has not only adopted and incorporated the religion of the Jews, but it has, in addition, an anthropomorphic system of its own. Without an anthropomorphic God, what becomes of faith, of reverence, of worship, of love, of sacrifice, of gratitude, and of hope?

When Paul saw an altar which the Athenians

*divine or  
become an  
human*

had erected "to the Unknown God," he said, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." He recognized the fact that in order to be made the object of worship and the basis of a religion, God must be made known, in other words, he must be made anthropomorphic. Man must be made to believe that the object he worships is in so far like himself as to possess like thoughts and feelings, so that a bond of sympathy can be established. Thence is opened up a whole world of relations which else are impossible. And nothing less than this is religion. God, being believed to be infinite in those attributes which are possessed by man in a finite degree, and which, therefore, he can understand—attributes of love, mercy, justice, wisdom, goodness, and power—becomes intelligently an object of love and worship; a being to be propitiated.

The God of the religionists, though he may be unknowable, is not unthinkable; for he is projected from human thought. But the Unknowable of Spencer is not only unknowable, but, as he himself admits, unthinkable, as well. Hence, it is an abstraction; nay, more, a negation of all thought whatever, as Sir William Hamilton maintains. We can truly say that so far as we know it does not exist. Mr. Balfour remarks that so far as he knows it may be true enough that the Unknowable exists, but he claims that it is outside of science and of all scientific research; and, he might have added, out-

side of all legitimate scientific speculation. So far as we know, the Unknowable is nothing.

Some critics have commented on the fact that the term "Unknowable," wherever it is used by the author of "First Principles," appears with an initial capital letter; and so, also, of every term which is used as its equivalent. This criticism, though it might at first appear to be a trifling one, is not entirely without force, if the use of the capital letter be looked upon as an attempt to make something out of nothing. Such an attempt would of course be futile. The Unknowable is unknowable still; the Unthinkable is unthinkable still; and Nothing can never be more than nothing.

The attempt, therefore, to reconcile Science and Religion by means of the Unknowable, is an attempt to reconcile something with something else through the intermediation of nothing. The religionist is asked to withdraw his thoughts from the contemplation of his highest ideal, and turn them into the blank void of nothingness. If he can succeed in doing this, then the old-time antagonism between Religion and Science is removed.

With what sort of religion has the reconciliation been effected? Not with the Christian religion. This has been repeatedly antagonized by Mr. Spencer. Nor has the reconciliation been effected with any religion which has as an essential element any system of morality.

It is a remarkable fact that there is no con-

nexion between Spencer's Data of Ethics and the Unknowable. On the contrary, the author of the Data of Ethics states explicitly that there is no relation between morality and the Unknowable. The following is his language:

"Right, as we can think it, necessitates the thought of not-right, or wrong, for its correlative; and hence to ascribe rightness to the acts of the Power manifested through phenomena, is to assume the possibility that wrong acts may be committed by this Power. But how came there to exist, apart from this Power, conditions of such kind that subordination of its acts to them makes them right and insubordination wrong? How can Unconditioned Being be subject to conditions beyond itself?"—[Data of Ethics, Sec. 99.]

At the banquet given to Mr. Spencer in New York, in 1882, Professor Fiske, the great expositor of Spencer in this country, in his after-dinner speech, made a mistake when he undertook to connect the moral law with the Unknowable.

"Human responsibility," said Professor Fiske on that occasion, "is made more strict and solemn than ever when the eternal Power that lives in every event of the universe is thus seen to be, in the deepest possible sense, the author of the moral law that should guide our lives."

The Professor here essayed to establish for Mr. Spencer a doctrine which he had himself expressly repudiated.

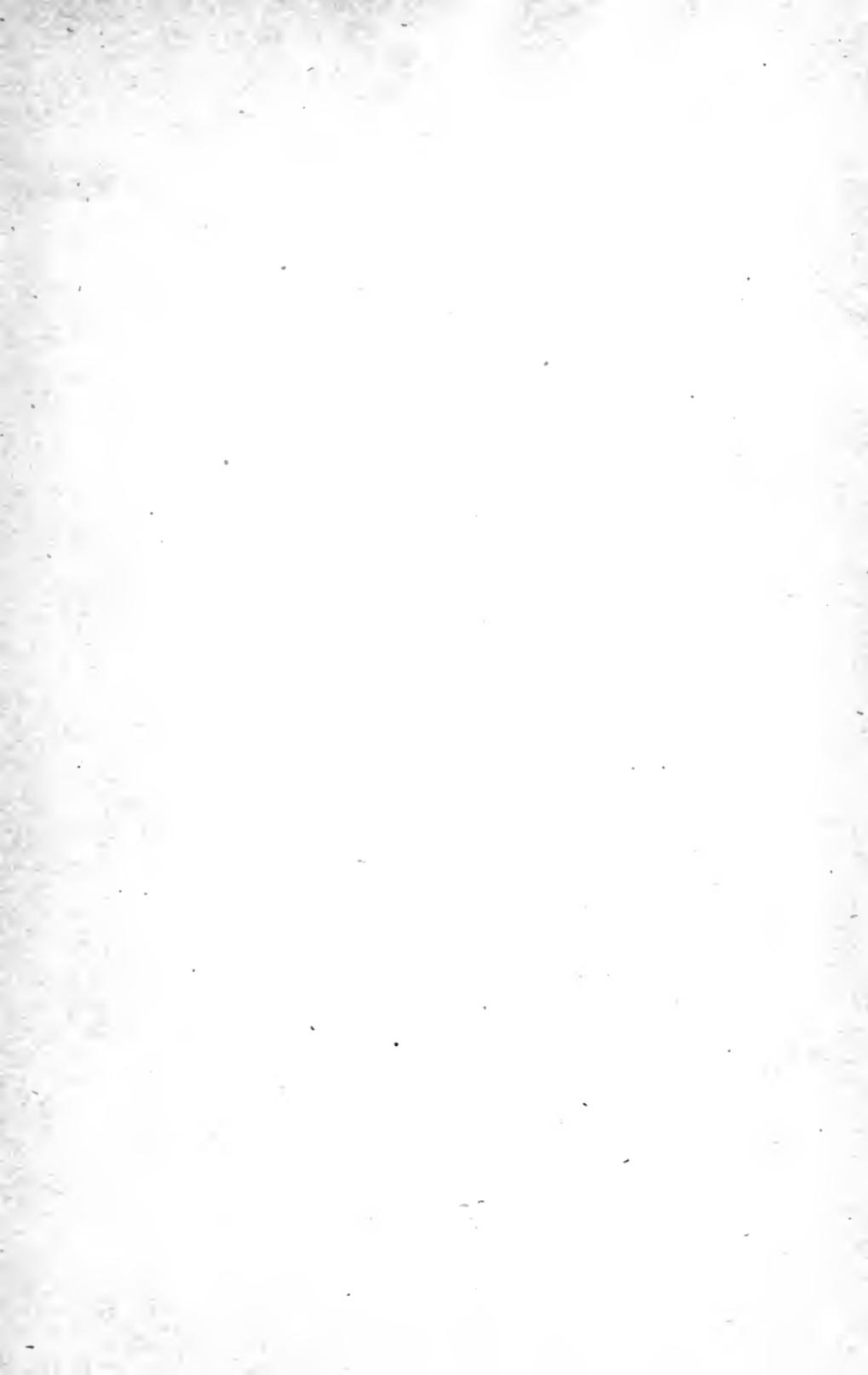
Since, then, the Unknowable is not subject to the moral law, nor in any way connected with it, and has no moral character, what becomes of the reconciliation between Science and Religion?

If there be a reconciliation, must it not be with a religion devoid of morality?

Here we have a doctrine which ignores morality, which its own author distinctly disconnects from his own system of ethics, and which at the same time he sets up as the mediator between Science and Religion.

What Science is, we all know; what Religion is or has been, is equally well established. But efforts are now being made to change the meaning of the term "Religion." Should those efforts succeed—should the word acquire a significance far different from the meaning which has been attached to it in all the ages of the past, then and not till then will there be a reconciliation between Science and Religion.





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